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MEMOIRS
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B.A.



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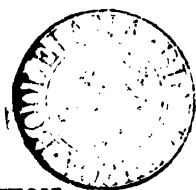
Yours very truly
H Legg

MEMOIRS
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B.A.,

**THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS PASTOR OF BROAD STREET CHAPEL,
READING.**

BY
GEORGE COLBORNE, M.A.,
HIS SUCCESSOR.

"He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God."—I JOHN iv, 16.



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PREFACE.

"WILLIAM LEGG, born August 3, 1800 ; died February 3, 1871 ;"—this, in bold letters, on a brass plate, at the bottom of a new brick grave, neatly white-washed. Some one looked over my shoulder and said, "'Tis a beautiful grave ;" and thus he interrupted many flocking thoughts and tumultuous emotions that were thronging my mind and heart, as, for the last time, I was wistfully looking down upon all that was now left of one who, for nearly forty years, had been my predecessor in the pastorate at Broad Street Chapel, and had thoroughly won my respect and affection during the comparatively short time that I had been privileged with his friendship. I mention this, because those thoughts and feelings were really the parent of this little volume. I was then thinking, "And so even this brass plate will soon be covered up and hidden from human sight, in all probability for ever. Will it be thus also with the man himself, and all that he did and suffered ? This inscription is a laconic epitome of all that the man was. It seems a great pity that it should be covered up and seen no more—but it is a thousand greater pities that all the words and deeds, of which this brass plate is only as it were the algebraic sign, should likewise be covered up in oblivion ! Yet will it not be so ? 'The Fathers, where are they ? and the Prophets, do they live for ever ?'" And then I heard those interrupting words about its being "a beautiful grave ;" and withdrawing my gaze, I left the brass plate, and the loved form over which it rested, to their helpless oblivion. But since then a restless desire has been upon me to do something to preserve some of the words and the deeds

PREFACE.

of my friend from an oblivion anything like so helpless. The desire would have its issue, and this little volume is its off-spring. I know not whether it will be still-born; I know not whether I do right in permitting my desire to have such an issue at all. However, if the reader judges me to have done wrong, I trust he will allow my sin to be venial.

You will see, if you care to take the trouble to peruse these pages, that I have not attempted anything worthy to be called a biography; all that I have done has been to cull a few flowers from my revered friend's life, and put them in print, with the hope that they may last a little longer than they otherwise might have done, to somewhat beautify and perfume still this dull world, which is not so affluent in such flowers that it may let any pass away without most reasonable regret. My first definite design in the matter was to write a memoir which should be complete, though short. This, however, I was soon obliged to abandon. I felt that to do that as it should be done, I should have to set down as fully the faults and failings of my revered friend as his virtues; and that I could not do. Such a thing might be useful; Holy Writ shows that it ought to be done by all faithful biographers. I have often read biographies in which this has not been done, and the unnatural paragons which have been presented in them have only irritated and depressed me. But how could I, with the picture of that "beautiful grave" still so fresh in my mind, sit down and deliberately write about the faults of my friend! No, they have been published enough already—perhaps too much. May all that has been done in that way effect whatever good it can.

And so I have confined myself to only culling a few flowers from the life of my revered friend. These I now present to the reader, confident that they will be found very sweet and very beautiful—unless, indeed, I have spoiled them in the plucking and setting.

G. C.

Reading, July, 1871.

"Ask Thee for a thoughtful love
Through' constant watching wise
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
A work of lowly love to do
For Him on whom I wait."

Memoirs of the Life

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B.A.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

"August 3rd, 1800, George Legg and his wife Barbara Brebner, in Cuminestoun, had a child born, and named William." Thus, with true Scottish simplicity and terseness, "the Records of the Parish of Monquhitter" set forth, in a sentence, the main particulars of an event, which to us is so interesting, that we believe volumes of very readable literature might be written about it and its sequences. Those dry "Records," in their official terseness, say nothing about all that took place at the time in the way of parental yearnings, and hopes, and fears; the plans that were formed; the prayers that were offered; the rejoicings with friends and neighbours that were held; and about the feelings and doings of this little "William" himself. And yet all these things were quite as real—in a certain sense more real—and, without doubt, far more interesting than just those names and dates

which have received immortality from the hands of the Parish Registrar. But, though by far the most important particulars of this event, all these things have entirely passed away, and are now hopelessly beyond the reach of mortal ken. However, this is a misfortune which, deplore it as we may, we cannot remedy. And it seems to me that as it is with the first sentence of these memoirs, so it must be, more or less, all through; for the cause of this misfortune lies deep;—as far beyond the reach of mine, or any one else's affection, as it was beyond both the reach and the concern of the Registrar's officialism. The real explanation of this very apparent and equally deplorable partiality on the part of fame, is simply this: Man is a spirit, and his outward conduct and all that is *observable* about him is merely superficial, except in so far as it *indicates* hopelessly hidden depths beneath. Hence, the greater part of every man's life not *only cannot* be recorded, but cannot even be known. There is within the breast of every human being profound depths of mystery which none can fathom, save, indeed, that great Spirit "that searcheth all things, even the depths of Thee, O God." There was a Holy of Holies within the heart of my revered friend; none ever entered it but the Great High Priest; and no human curiosity may ever profane it even for the purpose of seeing how brightly or how dimly the Shekinah shone there. However, so far as I attempt at all to supplement the "Records of the Parish of Monquhitte," I will endeavour to be as explicit as I can without altogether repudiating their enviable terseness.

Not long after "William's" birth his parents removed to Stewartfield, a village some two or three miles from Cuminestoun; and here, and in the immediate neighbour-

hood, he resided until after he had attained to manhood. This district of Aberdeenshire, which so long fostered him, is tame and uninteresting as compared with the wild grandeur of the Highlands, or the softer and richer beauty of the more southern Lowlands. From Stewartfield right away to Peterhead and the sea, the country is upon the whole flat and tame, and, all exposed as it is to cold north and east winds, is comparatively bare of trees. Away to the west all cultivation soon ceases in a tract of barren and bleak moorland, and far beyond in the blue distance rise the weird peaks of the Highlands. Yet about Stewartfield and its neighbourhood the traveller finds the general tameness of the scenery again and again broken and relieved by some quiet unsuspected dell, or wild rambling watercourse, or silent and ruggedly stern ravine. Moreover, the whole neighbourhood abounds in legends and romances. It was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting between the Covenanters and the second Charles Stuart. Several battles were fought at Turriff and Fyvie, within easy walking distance. Here and there a crumbling castle is to be met with, haunted by ghostly whisperings of many a marvellous scene and deed in days gone by. Moreover, the old people (and many of the young ones too) still believed in kelpies, and wraiths, and warlocks, and witches, and had many an *unco'* and thrilling tale to tell about them. Now it is a question still altogether undecided by philosophers how far the character and disposition of the inhabitants of any country or district are affected by its soil and scenery, or even whether they are thus affected at all. However that may be, it is certain that Mr. Legg grew up to have a temper as even as the general surface of the district that nurtured him; a disposition as calm and a coun-

tenance as placid as the general appearance of that landscape upon which his eyes first opened; a smile as genial as the aspect of that landscape beneath a summer's sun; and ever and again one would be discovering in him unsuspected revelations of luxuriant humour, racy wit, profound thoughtfulness, and strange and striking variations of womanly tenderness and manly sternness; and whenever fierce storms of affliction came down upon him, he was observed to bear them with a quiet resignation, which might be fancied to wear the appearance of his having been used to such things for as many ages as his native district has been used to the fierce north and east winds that so frequently sweep over it.

Mr Legg's parents were not wealthy in the usual acceptance of the term. But they appear to have been more than ordinarily rich in the very valuable possessions of stalwart common sense, considerable natural intelligence, and matured piety. Of his mother especially he would often speak with pride; he delighted to relate how she was looked up to by all the neighbourhood. One instance of this he often repeated: She was noted for her superior skill in treating and advising in cases of illness. When vaccination was first introduced, the doctors in her neighbourhood, either through prejudice or want of courage, shrank from administering it; whereupon Mrs. Legg undertook to vaccinate with her own hand all who would go to her, and such was the veneration in which she was held, and the confidence placed in her, that there were few, if any, in the village who did not come and willingly submit to the operation.

Both Mr. Legg's parents were extremely anxious for the spiritual welfare of their children. The Sabbath was a hallowed day in their household; morning and afternoon all

the family who were at all able to do so, attended Divine worship. In the evening the Bible was read and expounded, and the children further occupied themselves in committing to memory the Assembly's Shorter Catechism and hymns. The sacred calm, the holy peace and happiness, of those Sabbath days sank deep into the young soul of our friend. He ever retained a profound veneration and a jealous affection for the consecrated hours of the Sabbath. They were to him as a precious earnest of that eternal day of rest, which he is now gone to enjoy, after so many years of longing.

Our friend received his earliest education at the Parish School. These Schools in Aberdeenshire are very much superior to anything of the kind in England; they are more like the Grammar Schools of this country than our National or British Schools. The masters employed in them are generally graduates, or men who have been two or three years at the University; and there are two separate endowments which go to pay the masters' salaries. They are under the Inspectors of Schools for Scotland; and are attended as much by the children of the middle classes as by those of the poor. Doubtless, it is largely owing to these thoroughly efficient and yet cheap schools that the peasantry of Scotland are upon the whole so much better educated than the poorer classes in England.

After leaving school, some six years of his life were spent in farming. When about twelve years old he went to live with Mr. Morison, a farmer at Millseat, some seven or eight miles distant from Stewartfield. This Mr. Morison was the father of Dr. John Morison, whose fame is still in all the Churches. Mr. Legg's father and Dr. Morison's father were great friends. They were both men of piety, and their

united efforts accomplished much for the interests of Christ's kingdom in their neighbourhood. Notably, they were the first organizers of Sunday School work throughout the district of Buchan, where they resided. In going to live with the Morisons, Mr Legg was for a time very largely deprived of the wise and thoughtful oversight of his father, and the tender and anxiously affectionate training of his mother, whom he seems, as a child, to have almost worshipped. But the Morisons' household was as replete with holy influences as that of the Leggs', and his father's friend was not the man to exclude him from any of those influences. Mr. Morison was well known in those parts as a liberal and, in every way, pre-eminently valuable friend to "the good cause." His house was constantly visited by good and holy ministers of Christ who were labouring in the neighbourhood; many such, whose memories are still very fragrant in that part of Scotland, frequently stayed for days and weeks at a time beneath his hospitable roof. To the conversation of these good men our friend, as a youth, was privileged to listen, and his attention was constantly engaged by the sterling worth of their characters, by the earnestness and purity of their lives, and the sacred struggles and triumphs of their ministry. Thus his heart was early inspired with a deep reverence for piety, and trained to the appreciation of Christian worthiness. He was, indeed, peculiarly fortunate in education of this invaluable kind. The first feelings of reverence awakened within his heart by parental authority and dignity were sanctified by his father's piety; the first emotions of love aroused within his breast by maternal tenderness expended themselves, not only upon the gentleness of a mother, but also upon the loveliness of a saint. Also,

brothers and sisters, fostered amidst the same sacred home influences, constantly sought to cherish within him the piety they themselves had learnt to prize; especially one elder sister, of whom he often spoke, devoted to this object all the warmth of her affection. Then his residence with the Morisons, and the communion of saints by which their house was rendered holy ground; his association with his cousins—the Legges of Huntly—from whose household went forth Dr. James Legge, of China, and the late Dr. George Legge, of Leicester; and with the Spences, also of Huntly, a family which has given us Dr. James Spence, so long the revered minister of the Poultry Chapel, London, and the late Rev. Robert Spence, of Dundee—all these holy associations exerted their hallowing influences upon him whilst his character was developing and his individuality most plastic. Happy the man who in his early youth learns to revere piety by seeing it adorning the lives and characters of those whom his young heart reverences most profoundly and loves most fondly.

Mr. Legg lived with the Morisons several years, and during that time was commenced his life-long friendship with John Morison, afterwards Dr. Morison, of Trevor Chapel, Brompton, which became so eminently fruitful in mutual esteem and affectionate intercourse.

When about sixteen, our friend returned to Stewartfield, and there, for some two years, assisted his uncle upon a farm that he occupied close by.

It was no small advantage to spend so largely in the open air and in bodily exercises just those years of his life which especially constitute the period of growth and development. His fine, powerful constitution was thus healthfully matured, and at the same time he was also enabled

to acquire a certain admirable manliness of temperament. It would seem as if only a liberal amount of open-air exercise can possibly give that thoroughly masculine disposition which the English as a people so highly prize. It was also during this period of his life that he acquired that love of tilling the earth which all through his after-years furnished him with one of his choicest means of amusement. Gardening was always a hobby with him. From the growth of his crops and the blooming of his carefully cultivated flowers he derived a quiet and rich enjoyment, which many who painfully struggle after the hollow and uncertain applause of the world might reasonably envy. All the operations of nature he ever contemplated with pure and unfeigned delight. In after-years his favourite way of spending a holiday was to gather his family around him and take them for an excursion into the country. On such occasions he would beg of some ploughman the privilege of guiding the plough for a turn up and down the field, and would enjoy the surprise with which his rustic friend would witness the skill of his performance; or, again, he would take the sickle from one of a company of reapers, and delight to show that he was equal to the best of them; and often on leaving them he would, in all simplicity and naturalness, speak some word about the Great Heavenly Husbandman, that in due time might bear golden fruit for angelic reaping. In all this we see a simple-hearted, earnest, and very lovable man. Nature is ever full of gentleness, and liberality, and beauty, and ever eloquent with the praises of her God, and to the man who loves her well and diligently cultivates her favour, she will always be saying things very sweet and truly ennobling; and doubtless this is why one who is thoroughly a

lover of nature always without effort seems to win our hearts.

Mr. Legg whilst at school must have made more progress than is the case with most boys, for we hear that even when at his uncle's, he had become very fond of Virgil and Livy. He would take these authors out with him in his pocket when he went to tend his flocks; and beneath the blue canopy of heaven, whilst happy larks pour forth their songs of hope and gladness above his head, whilst

On this side, where in his neighbour's fence flowering willows
Ever afford to the bees of Mount Hybla food in abundance,
Comes there ceaselessly to him a soft somniferous murmur;
That side under the high rock sings to the zephyrs the woodman;*

whilst round about him flowers bloom and breathe forth
their perfume,—

Casæ green also widely perfuming
Serpilla, and spreading thyme loading the air with its odour
Grow luxuriant, and violets drink of the nourishing streamlet;†
amidst such most appropriate surroundings, with the keenest
appreciation he would pore over the *Bucolics* and *Georgics*.

Absint—picti squalentia terga lacerti! ‡

This love for the ancient classics conceived so early in life
remained with him quite to the last. The short period of

* Hinc (ei) quæ semper, vicino ab limite, sæpes
Hyblæis apibus florem depasta salicti,
Sæpe levi somnum (suadet) inire susurro;
Hinc alta sub rupe (canit) frondator ad auras;—
Virgil, *Ecloga*, i. 54—57.

† Casæ virides et olentia late
Serpilla et graviter spirantis copia thymbræ
(Florent), inriguumque (bibunt) violaria fontem;
Virgil, *Georgicon*, lib. iv. 30—32.

‡ Idem, lib. iv. 13.

complete leisure that he enjoyed after his retirement from the ministry was largely spent in re-perusing some of his favourite Latin and Greek authors. We can easily conceive how the thoughts of the great men of antiquity first lovingly deciphered in the days of romantic boyhood, amidst the enchanting melodies of nature and the sweet fragrance of springing flowers, would ever after possess for him peculiar charms. From this classical lore he doubtless derived much of that keenness of thought, and elegance and appropriateness of language, which enriched even his ordinary conversation.

But Virgil, and Livy, and the classics were not the only authors whom Mr. Legg delighted to peruse at this period of his life. His soul, awe-struck with greater thoughts than those contained in the pages of the ancients, or even in the glorious and wonderful book of nature, was eagerly engaged in searching into the fearful and solemn mysteries of God's revealed truth. There had been an awakening within him of spiritual life, and forthwith commenced a clutching after and a grappling with those "things unseen," with which the human spirit has to do. Sometimes, indeed, the horror of the darkness in which those "things unseen" were as yet all involved, contrasting with the very visible and keenly enjoyed brightness of those things which were not unseen, and in the midst of which only he had as yet really lived, succeeded in diverting his attention for a time from those solemn and all-important realities which he could never again entirely forget. But about this most interesting passage in his whole life he has told his own tale, and the reader would much rather listen to him than to me:—"I enjoyed," he says, "from the cradle ample instruc-

tion in the lessons of godliness, watered by constant prayer that I might be found 'among the living in Jerusalem.' And I can at this moment, by cherishing the fond remembrances, hear again the tones of unutterable interest in which a mother's tenderness whispered the character and love of a Saviour in the ear of my infancy. But the lessons of a father's vigilance and the earnestness of a mother's prayers seemed to be for a length of time alike utterly in vain. I loved the instructors and the mode of instruction, and on this account listened with respect, but I inwardly hated every truth which was communicated. I was never permitted wholly to forget these instructions, for though in the course of Providence the bounds of my habitation became fixed at a considerable distance from my native home, I was not altogether beyond the inspection of religious friends. Still my situation was one in which my soul was placed in imminent hazard, by the maxims and practices of sinful companions, with whom a large portion of my time was unavoidably spent, and with whom I had the misfortune to enjoy a dangerous popularity. It was not easy for superior religious advantages to repel the constant contiguity of such influences, and my mind became gradually very careless, and devoid of thought. Yet even then I was at times aroused from frivolity and folly by occasional intercourse with the eminently holy father and pious younger brother of my beloved friend, Dr. Morison. By a train of singular providential events that brother has, within the present year, been ordained pastor over a Church which, many years after the time referred to, I was myself rendered in some measure the means of collecting. Returning one evening from the house of these excellent friends, friends

I am sure for my father's sake more than at that time for my own, a messenger met me to inform me of the death of one of my brothers, which made a deep impression on my mind. So stunned were my affections, that between grief for my loss and fear about my soul, I felt as if it were cruelty for the ploughman to whistle at the plough, or even for the lark to sing in the heavens, the very fact that nature smiled around me becoming one of the most fertile occasions of dismay. This tendency to reflect my own feelings on external objects has often been a source to me of mingled sorrow and joy. By attending however to religious duties, and trusting in them, my conscience was first quieted and then became more hardened than before. The voice of God's people and the voice of His providence had awakened a salutary concern in my breast, I seemed earnestly engaged in the pursuit of salvation, but the enemy left no artifice untried, and in consequence of stifling convictions I became more callous, as iron is hardened in the fire.

"Being always fond of books, I purchased at this time, from a travelling retailer of small works, a copy of *Alleine's Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, which aroused me again to a state of great apprehension. Often did I retire to the thicket of a wood adjoining my abode to read that work under great horror of soul. All this however was got over, and my goodness was fleeting as the morning cloud and evanescent as the early dew. When sixteen years of age, I had two narrow escapes from death by accident, within a few weeks of each other. The latter of these gave me a very near view of the eternal world, which renewed my former impressions, or rather created new ones such as I had never before felt. For these circumstances I was in some measure prepared by

the solicitude of my elder sister, who, full of anxiety about my eternal salvation, had, a few weeks before the accident took place, taken me aside and plied my conscience so with the truths of religion and her sisterly tears, that after I had seen myself as it were ransomed from the grave, every word she had uttered seemed to have cleaved to me like an arrow sticking fast.

“I now began to see that the law of God is holy and spiritual ; that its demands are extensive, its penalties just, and that God would have been righteous if I had been condemned. I knew there was a Saviour provided for the guilty. I had also heard, fully and frequently enough, that He is able to save to the uttermost, but there was such a sense of guilt upon my mind that, at first, I could not venture to cry for mercy. I resolved however to abandon every sinful practice, and every sinful companion. Soon after this I occupied a situation where I had an opportunity of hearing the gospel from the lips of the Rev. James Robertson of Stewartfield. Although that gospel was plainly and powerfully preached in my hearing every Lord’s-day by this faithful minister, still my mind continued in a state of desponding agitation. I could apply none of the invitations of the gospel to my own case, although I saw that they were suitable to others. By means of these convictions, God gave me a more and more impressive view of my character as a sinner, and of himself as just and holy. But it does not appear that I yet hated sin as opposed to the divine law, but because it exposed me to punishment. In my case the knowledge of the bane was vivid and substantial, but the perception of the antidote was dim. I was convinced of sin, but not of righteousness. I was led to the refuge, through a long

course of painful conviction and harassing fear. So painful indeed was that process, that often did I arise from a restless bed, and seek in the silence and solitude of the night, the loneliest and dreariest situations, where I poured out my heart in prayer before God. Along with this, I steadily pursued such a course of reformation, as I thought would recommend me to his compassionate regard. I had a vague conviction that the only thing that can relieve a mind oppressed with guilt, and dreading a judgment to come, is that view of God which is afforded by the Gospel of Christ. Still I anxiously wished to do something that would render me fit for coming to Him.

“The state of my mind all this while, from a mistaken delicacy, I carefully concealed from my parents.

“While in the midst of this mental conflict, Boston’s Fourfold State fell into my hands. This book, through the blessing of God, was of great service to me,—in deepening my convictions, correcting my views of the plan of salvation, and showing me the folly and danger of that self-dependence which then prevailed in my mind. My Bible and that book were my constant companions in my leisure hours through the week, and on the Lord’s-day I attended the ministry of Mr. Robertson, already referred to, by means of which the Lord, in his tender mercy, was graciously pleased gradually to discover to me the fulness of Christ, and to give me some measure of joy and peace in believing.

“Still I kept all these things a profound secret. I often thought of proposing myself for admission into the Church, but I feared to do it lest I should have proved a reproach to the cause and people of God. It was not till several years after I had been enabled to trust in Christ for salvation, that

some circumstances, unknown to me now, induced Mr. Robertson to put certain questions to me which produced a free explanation respecting the state of my mind, and very soon led to my admission into the Church under his care. This had a decidedly favourable influence on my character. From that day down to the present hour, the Gospel, the people, and the ordinances of Christ, have, if I know anything of my own heart, been to that heart, with all its faults and follies, inexpressibly dear."

When eighteen years of age Mr. Legg left home, and entered upon a new kind of life. He was apprenticed for five years to a saddler at Peterhead. His indentures are before me as I write. The language employed is not so terse as that of "the Records of Monquhitter," but it, and the terms it sets forth, are quite as thoroughly Scotch, and quite as interesting. Indeed, these indentures, and the passage in Mr. Legg's life which they represent, appear to me peculiarly interesting and instructive. Just at that time of life at which our young men of the present day appear most impatient of authority he submitted to the yoke of a Scotch apprenticeship, nor felt himself galled by it; and yet, neither in spirit nor in ability, was he in the slightest degree wanting; rather he made himself distinguished for both. He still retained his fondness for literature, and often after the duties of the day were over would sit down to his books and pore over them until past midnight. He had already sufficiently mastered Greek to find delight in the perusal of Homer, from whose enrapturing pages, eloquent with the adventures of the gods and the mighty deeds of heroes, he chose his favourite motto,

"Always to excel in valour and be the superior of others." *

The submission and obedience which Mr. Legg's apprenticeship exacted from him at this time, so far from being derogatory to him, were, as I cannot help thinking, both beneficial and honourable. Doubtless they largely helped to mature that genuine courtesy, both of manner and of speech, for which, all through his after life he was eminently distinguished. They thus formed part of a truly liberal education, and in no small degree contributed to impart to his character the tone of a true gentleman. Some may feel inclined to smile at this, remembering that Mr. Legg's submission was that demanded from a common apprentice by his master a common tradesman. But is trade essentially a vulgar thing? Is it impossible for ennobling influences to flow from necessary industry? The prospects of the future are dismal enough if these questions must be answered in the affirmative; if, in very truth, the labours and the obedience exacted by "the sport," however much they may involve intercourse with ostlers, grooms, and such like, may develop gentlemanliness of character, whilst all the exercises of honest and necessary industry can only produce clownishness. We however, do not believe that this is the case. We see no reason why the obedience exacted from an apprentice by his master should not be productive of results quite as beneficial as those which are supposed to be produced by the fagging system in vogue at Eton. A thorough training in obedience to *any* lawful authority, is, I believe, in itself conducive to true courtesy of disposition and demeanour; and I am in-

* Ἀὖν ἀριστερεῖν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

Iliad, vi. 208.

clined to think that the ages are becoming less and less chivalrous just for the want of some such discipline as that which Mr. Legg passed through during his apprenticeship. Certainly, an early contempt for authority, and wanton lawlessness, must be productive of insolence, if not of boorish rudeness also, whether in the lower or in the upper ranks of society. Liberalism is a fine thing, but it needs a severe and thorough discipline to make it so; without that discipline it must run to seed in all kinds of ugly developments, such as would again ruin even the garden of Eden, and subject the earth to a second curse every whit as bad as the first.

Mr. Legg showed during this period of his apprenticeship (and of this I delight to speak) how simplicity and elegance may go together, and the life of an artisan may be refined by the most liberal and ingenuous accomplishments. This saddler's apprentice delighting in the perusal of Homer and Virgil, is a practical refutation of that dreary assertion which we so often hear—that education would unfit the working classes for the performance of their ordinary duties. Most certainly it had no such effect upon Mr. Legg; he acted up to his motto as much in his business as in anything else. At the end of his apprenticeship his master returned him his indentures, endorsed with a very flattering testimony to his diligence, honesty, and ability as a workman. Moreover, some of his fellow-townsmen entertained him at a public supper for “having made the best set of harness that had ever been turned out of Peterhead.” I cannot but envy those who were privileged to be present at that supper, for I feel fully persuaded that the maker of “the best set of harness that had ever been turned out of Peterhead,” could also make the best joke of any one in the town, and talk

most wittily, most genially, and at the same time most wisely; nor would there have been the slightest fear of one's feelings being shocked by any indecorous hilarity, for the hero of the party, though only a saddler, possessed himself all the feelings of a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian. One cannot but admire the large-heartedness and liberal-mindedness of this young man, who was, at the same time, a thorough workman, a diligent student, an earnest Christian, and a genial hearty friend, widely popular amongst his fellow-townsmen.



CHAPTER II.

PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

It had been one of the highest ambitions of Mr. Legg's pious parents to see one of their sons devoted to the work of the Christian ministry. No parental ambition can be more laudable than this. Surely no occupation is more honourable than that of preaching and teaching the hallowed truths of Christ's Gospel, and ministering in sacred things ; and it is not an excusable ambition, for it needs no excuse, but one altogether worthy of the highest commendation, when parents desire to see their children great in the kingdom of heaven. Parental ambition enough and to spare is wasted upon worldly greatness ; when we find any of it directed into a higher and holier channel, our first feelings are those of relief from a dreary monotony, whilst our more serious reflections fill us with a kind of sacred delight. But it was not only because his parents wished it that Mr. Legg, soon after the completion of his apprenticeship, finally resolved to enter the Christian ministry. This determination was the natural out-come of the intense earnestness of his religious feelings, uniting with that consciousness of his fitness for the work, which he could not but feel. He seemed to himself to be "called to be an Apostle ;" "that necessity was laid upon him ;" "that a dispensation of the Gospel was committed unto

him." If we analyzed this "call" we should probably find that such comparatively ordinary things as a consciousness of ability and an intense earnestness of desire were the principal phenomena about it. The operation of the Holy Ghost in all such matters is generally as inscrutable as that mysterious agency which causes seeds to germinate and all comely plants to grow and flourish.

Not very long after that public supper at Peterhead, at which our friend was acknowledged the best workman in the town in his own special craft, he resolved to transfer his abilities to a holier employment. By way of effecting this transfer he made an arrangement with the Itinerancy Society at Aberdeen for the Evangelization of those Parts, to preach for them, with the understanding that they should put him in the way of obtaining a college education. During the years 1825-6 he was a student at Marischall College, Aberdeen. All this time he was associated with the church under the pastoral care of the Rev. R. Penman, for which worthy minister of Christ he soon conceived the warmest regard. His Christian usefulness was abundant; amongst other things he conducted a most prosperous Sabbath-Evening School at Dee village, close to Aberdeen. "I remember," writes one of his sons, "when I first visited Scotland with him in 1848, with what pleasure some of his old Sunday scholars welcomed him—several of them in good positions in society." During these years at Aberdeen he made the acquaintance of an earnest and most amiable Christian young lady, Miss Margaret Kennedy, who, seven years afterwards, became his wife. I find amongst his papers a curious and interesting testimonial to his character and conduct whilst at Aberdeen. It is in the form of a resolution,

passed by "The Amicable Society," of which he was a member. If that amiable society is still in existence I feel sure they will pardon the liberty I venture to take in publishing their testimonial. It runs as follows :—

"At a meeting of the Amicable Society, Aberdeen, held on Saturday, the 26th March, 1826, it was moved by Mr. Smith, and unanimously agreed, that this Society learns with unfeigned regret that they are about to be deprived of Mr. Legg, as a member, in consequence of his being under the necessity of leaving Aberdeen ; that during the period of his membership his talents have done honour to the Society, while his conduct has entitled him to the esteem and affection of his fellow-members ; and that they beg to assure him that he carries with him their warmest wishes for his prosperity. It was also resolved that this resolution be inserted in the minute-book of the said Society, and that a copy, signed by the President and Secretary, be presented to Mr. Legg, before his departure, as a testimony of their respect for his abilities, and their affection for him as a fellow-member.

"Signed, in name and by appointment
of the Amicable Society,
ROBERT THOMSON, President,
ALEX. REACH, Secretary.

"Aberdeen, 30th March, 1826."

From Aberdeen Mr. Legg went to Glasgow, where, for two years and a half, he studied at the Theological Academy in connection with the Congregational Union of Scotland. At the same time he graduated at the University, taking the degree of Bachelor of Arts. His theological tutors were Drs. Wardlaw and Greville Ewing, two men whose piety and ability eminently fitted them for the noble work they so illustriously accomplished for their generation in the way of preparing young men for the ministry of the Gospel, and otherwise. Mr. Legg made them his personal friends. In

their testimonial upon his leaving the Academy they thus wrote :—

“While under our tuition and attending the classes at the University, he discharged all the duties of a student with exemplary assiduity, and with much credit to himself and satisfaction to his teachers, and maintained an irreproachable Christian deportment. We affectionately commend him to the grace and blessing of God.”

Our friend abundantly proved in after life how well he had profited by the teaching of these distinguished men. A more than ordinary acquaintance with both doctrinal and historical theology rendered his preaching, and often his conversation, “richly instructive.” In connection with the University he took an active part in the conduct of a Debating Society, of which the present Archbishop of Canterbury and the late Mr. Selfe, one of the Metropolitan Police Magistrates, were also members. Such association with such fellow-students was likely to have noteworthy results. “Iron sharpeneth iron,” and it is interesting to us to know that such men as these took part in sharpening “the countenance” of our friend.

The acquisitions of Mr. Legg during these years of study were by no means slight. His memory was more than ordinarily good, and during his college days he acquired information upon a wide range of subjects which stood him in good stead all through his life; nor was his knowledge in some things, especially in theology and classics, at all superficial; indeed, in it all there was more or less of that thoroughness which is the mark of genuine scholarship. There is a letter written to his sister during the time he was at Glasgow, which, whilst it exhibits his innate affectionateness

of disposition, also so pleasingly shows what cultivation of mind he had at this time acquired, that I feel constrained to give some extracts from it. It is in ordinary conversation, or in such unstudied correspondence as this, that genuine cultivation perhaps makes itself most satisfactorily evident. Art so matured that it no longer involves effort, but adorns a man's most spontaneous utterances with all the ease and grace of nature—that is the best proof of thorough cultivation of intellect. Such art seems to me displayed in this letter of Mr. Legg's to his sister—a spontaneous product of his warm brotherly affection. He thus writes :—

“My dear Sister,

I am much obliged to you for thinking of me in this distant corner of our island, more especially for sending me a few lines now and then. There is something so delightful in receiving a letter. [This was written at a time when letters were more weighty affairs than is generally the case in these days of penny postage.] It is, we know, something designed exclusively for us, in which no other person has or can have anything like an equal interest. When we are suddenly reminded by a letter of one who loves us, and is by us equally beloved, and see our name in the well-known hand, a flush of delight pervades the whole frame, the heart beats with eager expectation, and hastens in full benevolence to meet the heart of the writer. A correspondence by letter between affectionate and enlightened relations and endeared friends, is a spiritual communion in which minds alone seem to mingle. The soul in such cases seems to escape from the fetters of mortality, and being unembarrassed by the presence of the body, converses with a freedom, a fervour, and an eloquence seldom excited and perhaps never so felicitously indulged in personal intercourse. Have you not felt it? Is not your last kind letter a present, I might say living, example of it? Some subjects in that epistle are of a nature the most delicate, such as perhaps even to *me* would have been too refined for personal communica-

tion ; and yet by means of this heaven-granted medium, you are enabled to converse about them with an ease and familiar freedom that does honour to your heart, and certainly gratifies me not a little, whom you are so kind as to trust with the labouring of a wounded spirit. When I say that it gratifies me it is plain that the principle is selfish in me . . . but it affords me pleasure to know that I possess the confidence of one I love so well." . . .

The letter goes on to treat of private matters with which I need not trouble the reader ; enough I trust has been given to show that our friend possessed at this time, not only refinement of feeling, but also cultivation of intellect.

His vacations Mr. Legg mostly spent in labouring for the Evangelistic Itinerancy Society at Aberdeen, with which he was connected. These missionary labours were a most valuable discipline for him in many respects. In them he had for the most part raw material to work upon ; most of the villages and out-of-the-way country places that he visited had long been almost completely destitute of Gospel light. The breaking up of fresh ground is perhaps the best occupation for a beginner in any business. The ardour of his first, and so necessarily unskilled, enthusiasm can thus spend itself altogether to profit ; for it is a good thing for virgin soil to be broken up at all, no matter how, if honestly and vigorously ; and it is most discouraging when the beginner, set about more difficult tasks, finds that half of his enthusiasm, all of which he feels to be in itself sacred, through want of skill, has no other effect than to neutralise the results of the other half. The ardour of many a minister of the Gospel has thus received a blight from which it has never afterwards entirely recovered. And then the work of the Christian ministry must always be in the main Evangelistic, and so

it is well when a minister at the outset has sufficient of such work to imbue him with a thorough and permanent Evangelical spirit.

Some of Mr. Legg's preaching excursions were not only very useful, but also very interesting. What records of them I find among his papers, if space permitted, I would publish in full, confident that the reader would be glad to peruse them. As a fair specimen, here is an extract from a long letter written from Huntly to his Tutor, in 1828 :—

“I have preached at different times to an audience of between three and four hundred attentive people, where, in the memory of the oldest residents, a dissenter had never preached, and where probably a Gospel sermon had seldom or never been heard. One of these stations is in a very favourable part of the country, and it is anticipated that could labourers be had it might become in a very few years a flourishing station for the permanent dispensation of divine ordinances.

“The only month during which I have not been in this neighbourhood was July, when, at the request of the Aberdeen Society, I went up the Dee-side, preaching from Aberdeen to Ballater, a distance of 42 miles. On the upper part of this field I met with a good deal of opposition from the existing powers, particularly at Ballater. The cause of it I ascertained to be this: At the very commencement of Independency in Scotland the Laird of Monaltrie, in whose lands the above-mentioned village stands, received a wound which has continued to rankle to the present day. Two of our ministers preached in his village; the Laird thought he had a right to be greatly offended. He had them apprehended, and sent them to Aberdeen in safe-keeping. The affair, however, was not in good keeping for the poor Laird. They sued him at the law; he lost, and was disgraced. And on his return home he had a charter drawn out securing that no dissenting meeting-house should ever be built in *his* village—that no religious meeting be ever held in any house

in his village—and that the masons (the *free* masons) should never give their hall for love nor money to any itinerant preacher under the pains and penalties of having their own charter and their property taken from them. [Mr. Legg was not a mason, it seems, and this “poor Laird” could never have been fully enlightened.] In consequence of all this I was not allowed a house, and as it rained all Sabbath I could not preach in the street, though I knew a number were anxious to hear. I preached, however, four times in the immediate vicinity to very good meetings. I told some of the more respectable and friendly people that such opposition was in the face of the Toleration Act, and I have heard since that they are taking measures to examine the legitimacy of the Laird’s charter. Though I was thus rebuked at Ballater, the state of things at Upper Banchory was the very reverse. Banchory is a beautifully situated village on the banks of the Dee, eighteen miles from Aberdeen. The Society had employed one of their agents at this place about a month before I went. I preached three Sabbaths and during the week days, under the most encouraging circumstances; and since I returned hither, under the full conviction that I should be privileged to return soon to Glasgow, the few pious people residing in and near Banchory have written a long and interesting letter to the friends in Aberdeen, urging them to use their influence to send me to Banchory in winter, to continue among them, and see what can be done for a permanent establishment of the Gospel there. They have already fixed on a new unfurnished house, which they intend to fit up as a meeting-house for the present, as the chapel which has long stood there, but never had a settled preacher, is in bad repair. They speak in confident terms of the countenance and co-operation of a large body of the country people in the way of assisting them to forward their plans. After due deliberation and prayer I have been led, though not without a sigh, to relinquish the idea of returning to our beloved Academy, the scene of some of my happiest and most profitable hours. The people at Millseat, anxious and, I believe, ready to form a church, have also invited me to labour among them, but I feel more inclined at present to go at least for a time to Banchory.” . . .

Both Banchory and Millseat successively enjoyed for short periods Mr. Legg's ministry ; an interval of three months, which he spent labouring at Banff, elapsing between the two pastorates.

These early missionary labours had a permanent effect upon the character of our friend's life and ministry. His warm and unflagging sympathy with missionary efforts of all kinds was conspicuous. He was for many years local secretary of the London Missionary Society, and of the Society for Mission Work amongst Sailors. The last letter he wished written, when he was too ill to rise in bed, was to hand over his London Missionary Society books to Mr. Andrewes, the Treasurer of the Reading Auxiliary. The last hymn he had read to him was—

- “Behold ! the mountain of the Lord,
In latter days, shall rise
On mountain tops, above the hills,
And draw the wond'ring eyes.
- “To this the joyful nations round,
All tribes and tongues, shall flow ;
Up to the hill of God,—they'll say,—
And to His house we'll go.
- “The beam that shines from Zion's hill
Shall lighten every land ;
The King who reigns in Salem's towers
Shall all the world command.
- “Come then, O house of Jacob, come
To worship at His shrine ;
And, walking in the light of God,
With holy beauties shine.”

These words, which cheered his departing spirit, long years of earnest evangelical yearnings and labours had rendered dear to him.

The mention in the above extracts of the persecuting Laird at Ballater is eminently characteristic. Love of civil and religious liberty almost amounted to a passion in our friend. The fervour of youth passed away, and his natural geniality of disposition ripened into greater and still greater mellowness as he advanced in years, yet all through his life, any encroachment upon religious or civil liberty would arouse within his breast some such martial ardour as that which probably his ancestors were wont to feel when the neighbouring Highlanders threatened a raid upon their well-stocked barns and folds. Or else one might suppose that the sturdy, earnest spirit of those old Covenanters, whose blood had been poured out upon his native plains, in rich and only too copious libations to the good cause of religious liberty, still lingered in the air of the district, and had been plentifully imbibed by Mr. Legg in his early years. The reader of these memoirs will observe how almost every passage of my friend's life, which I have attempted to sketch, is more or less strongly characterized by this same spirit.

Mr. Legg was born to be a public speaker : Nature specially fitted him for such an office by the commanding presence, the ready utterance, and the readier wit which she conferred upon him. God's grace further fitted him, and called him to the highest work which a public speaker can perform—that of preaching the Gospel. But preaching was not only his forte, it was his delight ; he did it with ease and he did it with pleasure. The inspiration of the poet rejoices and exults in finding expression ; it sometimes is the same with the more sacred inspiration of the preacher. The Good God has made the proper exercise of all the powers

with which he has endowed us more or less blissful, and it would be a happy thing for mankind if, as a whole, they appreciated that bliss sufficiently to be content with it. In his early years our friend's readiness of utterance was accompanied, not only with the earnestness that one always found in him, but also with an ardent and sometimes fiery enthusiasm. His first sermon was preached in Frederick Street Chapel, Aberdeen, after very little preparation. His friend, the Rev. R. Penman, was taken suddenly ill, and there being no time to get a supply, he requested Mr. Legg to officiate. He complied, and taking for his text John iii. 3, preached what some of his friends were pleased to call a very good sermon indeed. Unfortunately for us, this readiness of speech, which enabled him to preach his first sermon with so little preparation and so much acceptance, prevented him from ever writing out his discourses in full; so that whilst I shall be able to present to the reader extracts from several of his speeches which the newspaper reporters have preserved, all the thousands of sermons that he preached have passed beyond our reach. Many of them, however, still live in the memories of those to whom he ministered, and many more, though now altogether forgotten as to their words, have increased the spiritual life of his people, and are thus still bearing rich fruit. Latterly his preaching, though earnest and often very beautiful, was almost always calm and quiet; but many of his oldest hearers in Reading have not forgotten that fire of his youth which attracted such large audiences amongst the villages of Aberdeenshire.

CHAPTER III.

SETTLEMENT AT READING.

IN MARCH, 1831, Mr. Legg came to supply at Broad Street Chapel, Reading. The Rev. Archibald Douglas was then pastor of the church. Mr. Douglas was in his 68th year. He had already had two co-pastors to assist him in his labours. The Rev. T. G. Stamper had been with him two years, and the Rev. T. C. Everett, a young man of extraordinary piety and ability, had succeeded Mr. Stamper. The church and their revered pastor were now looking out for further assistance. Mr. Legg preached two Sundays. His services were most acceptable, and a desire was expressed that he should come again on probation for the co-pastorate. He had engaged to supply the pulpit at George Street Chapel, Cork, for three months, but agreed to return to Reading at the end of that time. The church at Cork was vacant through the removal of the Rev. John Burnett to Camberwell. Mr. Legg had not ministered long to this people before he completely won their hearts, and in May they gave him a most cordial and unanimous invitation to remain with them as their pastor. His reply is characteristic of him ; it is both honourable and affectionate. In it he proposes to return to Reading to fulfil his promise to the church at Broad Street, and if nothing should come of that he will

accept their invitation, with which he expresses himself much gratified. He says :—

“ I still feel as if I were bound to return to Reading, and to return unengaged to any other church, as they have most distinctly specified their design in reference to my coming. . . . If you think it consistent with your views of right to grant the above proposal I will leave immediately after next Lord's day ; but if you cannot, then, dear brethren, permit me to assure you that while I decline your invitation it is with feelings of unfeigned respect towards all the members of the church, and of the most sincere affection for all with whom it has been my happiness to become more intimately acquainted during my short stay.” . . .

His proposal was acceded to. He returned to Reading in June, and entered upon a three months' probation for the co-pastorate at Broad Street Chapel. The result of this was a hearty invitation, which he felt bound to accept. He thus expresses himself in his letter of acceptance :—

“ Without any plan or arrangement of my own my steps were directed to Reading, and though my residence in it, on my first visit, was but short, yet it was sufficiently long to excite in my mind towards the place as a field of exertion, towards you as a Christian church, and your pastor, as fellow-labourer, feelings of preference which all my ‘goings in and out among you, beholding your order,’ have only served to confirm. It being my conviction that duty required me to re-visit you, I cheerfully kept my purpose to your pastor, and resisted every inducement to settle in another part of our Lord's vineyard.”

Then he appears to feel deeply the heavy responsibility which he is taking upon himself, and goes on as follows :—

“ It [their invitation] has indeed served to deepen, by placing the object in a more near and personal point of view,

those feelings of the momentous responsibility which belong to the charge of immortal souls ;—a charge the weight of which I feel, though not in a degree which its magnitude plainly demands, yet in such degree as would certainly overwhelm me and prevent me from accepting your invitation were I not sustained and encouraged by the confidence which your past intercourse with your ministers and with myself has inspired ; by the sentiments of love and esteem I feel for your respected pastor ; and above all by the power and presence of the Redeemer. . . . And now, brethren, while I feel that in myself I am utterly insufficient for every good work, but confiding in the promise of that Redeemer who has promised to be with His servants even to the end of the world, and desiring humbly to proceed in the work of God, let me request an interest in your prayers in the words of the Apostle Paul when he said, ‘ Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,’ that I may make full proof of my ministry, and finally meet the approbation of the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls.”

In all this the Christian humility and the kindly nature of the man shine forth beautifully. This letter is dated, “ London, Oct. 8th, 1831,” and he settled down at Broad Street immediately after. The prayers he desired were doubtless offered ; and how they were answered a long ministry of nearly forty years with many “ seals ” shows.

He was ordained on the 14th of December following. But before that time he was called to pass through “ the deep waters ” of a severe illness. He was still very weak, and was obliged to be supported during the Ordination Prayer. The Rev. Dr. Morison, his own personal friend and the son of his father’s friend, gave the charge. The Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, preached the sermon to the people. The young minister, pale and trembling, with the hand

of God still upon him, read his "Confession of Faith," in reply to the usual ordination question, asked by the Rev. J. B. Pearce, of Maidenhead—"Will you state your views of the leading doctrines of the Christian faith?" It may be well to give a summary of that "Confession," as in it are expressed the views of Divine truth which Mr. Legg held and preached throughout his ministry with very little variation. He begins by stating his belief in the Holy Scriptures as the inspired oracles of God; he then goes on to set forth his belief in the Unity and Trinity of God according to the views held by the orthodox; also, in the original purity, the temptation, and the fall of man, and in the total depravity of man; then, in the promise of the Messiah, in the Mosaic dispensation as a preparation for the Messiah, and in the incarnation, earthly life, and crucifixion of our Lord as narrated in Holy Scripture. Thus far his views are those of the great body of the orthodox, and call for no particular comment. In his views of the Atonement the *timbre* of his belief best manifests itself; about this he says:—

"Christ's death, as He was altogether free from personal sin, was, I believe, a perfect *propitiation*, well-pleasing unto God. The Divine dignity of His Person gave such a value to his temporary sufferings, that 'His blood cleanseth from all sin.' . . . By the transgression of man the authority of the law was called in question; the dignity of the Divine justice was obscured; the moral government of God was injured; and till the penalty be fully inflicted on the offender, or some scheme devised, by which the law might enjoy its restored honour, and its authority meet a solemn vindication, the character of God as legislator was exposed to obloquy and reproach. . . . In the counsels of God a Saviour for man was not only provided, but a certain definite number of

the human race was chosen to receive the blessings of redemption, and to become heirs of heaven and of a glorious immortality. . . . This atonement, I believe, is sufficient for *all* men, and it is on the ground of this sufficiency that the invitations which are addressed to sinners indiscriminately are both consistent and rational. . . . But while the atonement is *sufficient* for *all*, it is *efficient* only to believers. Its blessings are proffered to all who hear the Gospel, but imparted to such only who embrace it. Faith in Christ is hence the medium through which the blessings of the atonement are communicated. . . . Hence, I believe it to be the positive duty of all to whom this method of remedial mercy is made known, cheerfully to receive it by faith; for while sinners, as I have said, can never work their way by intellectual improvement, from their degraded condition to pristine purity, yet to a full compliance with the demands of the Gospel, there is, I apprehend, no other impediment except a wilful and, consequently, a criminal enmity of heart against it. And here also the man is met precisely as required by his moral wants. The doctrines, the invitations of the Gospel, are applied to his heart and conscience, by the free and almighty energy of the Holy Spirit discovering to him the glory of Christ, and disposing him to believe in His name."

After this he goes on to state his belief in the adoption into God's family of all who believe; in their Sanctification; in their Final Perseverance through the constancy of God's grace; in the distinction between the Church and the world; in Pastors and Deacons as the only Church officers recognized in the New Testament; in the sanctity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; in Pædo-baptism; in the Resurrection of the dead, and in the last Judgment.

From this brief summary it will be seen that Mr. Legg's views were Evangelical and Calvinistic. No change appears to have taken place in them, except, perhaps, that gradually they grew more highly Calvinistic. Altogether, this "Con-

fession" is a masterly piece of theological exposition. It will be found at length in Mr. Legg's "History of Broad Street Chapel," and will well repay careful reading.



CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE.—ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN CASTLE STREET.

I HAVE mentioned that just before his ordination Mr. Legg was afflicted with a very severe illness. That sickness was really an era in his life. He soon seemed to recover from it completely, and survived nearly forty years, but the seeds of the disease were never eradicated. From that time they slowly but steadily developed, until at last they killed him. No doubt it was owing to this disease that his temperament appeared to become increasingly sluggish as he advanced in years. Those who knew him only in the latter part of his life imagined this sluggishness to be altogether constitutional, and there were even others who called it by an uglier name; but the facts of his life prove that in his day he was a man of immense activity. It was not his custom to talk much about himself, least of all about his ailments; yet, had he done so, he would probably have escaped a good deal of harsh judgment. How often should we have much more charitable opinions of our friends, if we knew all the hitches and jarrings, and general craziness of those delicately complex, but often most faulty, machines of flesh and blood in which their spirits have to live, and struggle, and suffer.

During more than a year of his new life in Reading, Mr. Legg lodged in Russell Street, with Miss Lamb, the talented conductor of a large and somewhat famous boarding school for boys. The year 1832 was one of immense political excitement. The first Reform Bill was passing through Parliament. This excitement would not be unshared by the new co-pastor at Broad Street ; and through it in all probability his people became early acquainted with that hatred of oppression, and that love of justice and freedom, which he so often during his career showed himself to possess.

In the summer of 1833 Mr. Legg married. He brought his wife home to a house which he had furnished in Oxford Street. This union was a very happy one. Miss Margaret Kennedy was as actively devoted to her Saviour as she was gentle and womanly in her intercourse with her fellow-men. Very early in life she had given her heart to Christ, and devoted herself to Sunday School teaching. While yet in her teens, she was chosen superintendent of a very large Sabbath evening school in Aberdeen, where she then resided. However, though she laboured very hard for her Saviour in this and many other ways, yet, through her great self-diffidence, it was not until she was twenty years of age that she could be induced to join the Church. On the occasion of her doing so, Mr. Legg was one of those appointed by the Rev. R. Penman, the pastor of the Church, to visit her. He found her in great anguish of soul ; trembling with the sense of her unworthiness ; fearing to take what seemed to her so bold a step, and equally afraid to delay any longer that open profession of Him, which she felt her Lord demanded. How Mr. Legg spoke to her we can well imagine. Manly strength is often accompanied by gentleness

incomparably refined and delicate; such gentleness our friend was continually manifesting. This was in 1826; now, seven years later the sympathy and affection which strengthened her in that trying hour became hers for ever, by the closest and holiest of bonds. Thus our friend settled down happily to his ministerial life in Reading. A young family soon began to grow up around him, and amidst the increasing affections of his people, there sprang up and flourished the even more sacred and more sweetly-perfumed flowers of wifely and filial love.

In 1836 the Independent Church in Castle Street was founded; really, by the Puritan residuum of those exiled from St. Giles' Church, after the death of the Rev. William Cadogan. The history of this people is very remarkable, and demands a passing notice. The Hon. and Rev. William Bromley Cadogan had gathered round him a truly pious people, by whom he was intensely revered and loved. This people he fed with rich spiritual food, and living amongst them an eminently pious and devoted life himself, he developed within them to an unusual degree the capability of appreciating and enjoying spiritual things. Death suddenly struck him down in the midst of his usefulness. His successor was a very different kind of man, one altogether incapable of satisfying the hungering souls of that flock which, under Mr. Cadogan's ministrations, had acquired such an appetite for the true Bread of Life that they could not possibly be satisfied with mere forms and ceremonies. They left St. Giles' Church in a body. They were invited to worship at Broad Street Chapel until they had matured their plans. By the Broad Street people they were treated as guests until their new chapel was built in Castle Street.

Then they left, and formed themselves into a strong Church in their new place of worship. For many years they worked in union with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion ; but after the removal of the Rev. James Sherman to Surrey Chapel, London, the Church was placed under the government of the Establishment by the trustees, and the Rev. Mr. Goodhart, the predecessor of the Rev. Mr. Tubbs, the present incumbent, was appointed, with the Episcopal sanction. Those who were Dissenters at heart left on this occasion, and built Castle Street Independent Chapel. The Rev. Mr. Curwen took the oversight of the new Church in 1836, and in him Mr. Legg acquired a most warm-hearted and valuable companion and friend.



CHAPTER V.

OWEN CONTROVERSY.—DEATH OF MR. DOUGLAS.

TOWARDS the end of 1838 Mr. Robert Owen came to Reading and preached the gospel of his "new moral world." Mr. Owen was a man of remarkable ability, and of great natural goodness of heart. He was not highly educated, his only literary training having been obtained at the elementary school of his native town—Newtown, in Montgomeryshire. At a comparatively early age he was apprenticed to a draper at Stamford. He afterwards became partner in a cotton-spinning factory, and it was in connection with his mills at Lanark, in Scotland, that he first attempted a practical development of his Communistic principles. He had seen very clearly somewhat of the endless confusion and numberless wrongs of this unhappy world of ours, which man's own sinfulness has turned upside down. His seeing this was not a proof of genius; the effect that the sight had upon him marked him out as an extraordinary man. His great heart swelled with enthusiasm; and his powerful mind threw all its energies into the one work of setting right the world's wrongs. So far Robert Owen is altogether worthy of admiration and reverence, and we feel proud to be able to sympathise with him. But unhappily, though a great man, and

largely a good man, he was nothing more; he had not attained to any Divine enlightenment, and the best qualities of the best of men, unless divinely succoured by the good God who gave them, are sure to fall a prey, sooner or later, to those evil qualities with which they are always so thickly surrounded in poor fallen human nature. The besetting sin of Mr. Owen appears to have been self-sufficiency, and to this vice both his goodness of heart and greatness of mind seem to have become at last entirely enslaved. Society was all wrong, and he was able to set it all right. He held just these two convictions with a tenacity almost amounting to mania. In the strength of them he challenged *all* "the powers that be," including even God Himself. Kings, all existing governments, all aristocracies, and all respectabilities whatever, especially the ministers of religion, and and their Christ and God, must be swept away, and then Mr. Owen would show them what he would show them,—in point of fact he would build up for them his "new moral world." In the blindness of his self-sufficiency it does not appear to have ever occurred to him that he was undertaking to do more even than the Most High is believed to have done when He first made this world; for God only called forth this world from chaos, but Mr. Owen had first to produce his chaos before he stood a chance of being able to form his "new world." And "this wicked world," as perverse one way as another, stubbornly refused to sink into chaos at Mr. Owen's bidding.

Mr. Owen came and urged this duty upon society at Reading, and found this town, if anything, more perverse than the rest of the world. He applied for the Town Hall wherein to promulgate his doctrines. The authorities re-

fused to let him have it. For this they have been blamed ; even Mr. Legg condemned them ; but I cannot help thinking that in that he was very hard upon the authorities of Reading. Mr. Owen came with the avowed intention of doing all that lay within his power (and he himself was firmly convinced that that was a great deal) to abolish them both as magistrates and Christians. I cannot see that even the extreme of Christian charity, the most devoted love of one's enemies, need impose upon us the duty of obliging our enemy with a cup wherein to mix the poison with which he tells us he intends to poison us ; the most refined charity I think would suggest our refusing the cup, if only by way of discountenancing his evil design.

Mr. Owen was refused the use of the Town Hall. He obtained, however, the theatre, and there, with all that ability for which he was remarkable, proclaimed his startling doctrines. It may be thought that the preaching of such views as those of Mr. Owen must necessarily be harmless ; that they were sure to be condemned as soon as heard. But it should be remembered that nearly half that Mr. Owen said was quite true, and what was not true he himself fully believed, and so would talk about it as if it were true ; and error spoken as if it were truth, and mixed with a fair amount of real truth, forms a most plausible compound. Moreover, Mr. Owen attacked both religious and magisterial authority, and there are always a great many people glad to lay hold of any excuse for rising up against any established authority whatever, even though it should be the best possible. And so the old Theatre, was soon filled, first with an attentive, then with an only too believing, audience. Mr. Legg, in his History of Broad

Street Chapel, tells us, that one Sunday, when Mr. Owen was holding forth, a thunder-storm burst over the place. Probably nerved by the excitement thus likely to be produced in her, a young lady, of high talents and attainments, rose up before the assembly and publicly thanked Mr. Owen for delivering her from the old superstition of a God thundering in the skies. Evidently the town was getting in danger. Mr. Owen was a persecuted man because he had been denied the Town Hall. True, he had anything but a claim to it. Still he looked like a persecuted man, and that would be quite sufficient to elicit the sympathy of many; and now, with this feminine advocacy of his cause, where will the matter end? It seems that Mr. Owen himself felt that he was getting on, for on the 21st of December we find him sending forth a challenge to all "the ministers of the Church of England and Dissenting Congregations, and also to the gentlemen of the town of Reading who have thought it their duty to denounce the principles and practices I advocate." In this challenge he speaks as usual of "superseding the present old, ignorant, worn-out state of society," and calls himself "Your friend, and the friend of mankind." In a postscript he adds, "And if you, gentlemen, can convince me that I am in error and that you are right, I will exert the same energy in promoting your cause that I have hitherto used in opposition to it, for my most conscientious convictions have been, and are, that you are all deeply involved in the most melancholy errors." This challenge he put into the form of a circular, and sent it round to the chief inhabitants of the town. Mr. Legg was favoured with one. I cannot believe that it was desire for popular applause, or anything but the feeling that he was able to crush Mr. Owen in public, and

thus stem this tide of evil that had lately been introduced into the town, that induced our friend to accept this challenge. Mr. Legg was really a man of great mental power, but only the trumpet call of duty ever seemed to wake him up to the consciousness of this, and to its exercise. However, when he was fully roused, he was like a giant refreshed with new wine, and woe to the error or the folly which had roused him. Then he would not only labour and fight; but exhilarated by the consciousness of the power that he possessed, and utterly devoid of fear, he would go to work with a will, and with a positive enjoyment in what he had to do. However, he did not accept this challenge rashly, and in consenting to meet Mr. Owen was not guilty of the self-sufficiency of his antagonist. Before combing out his locks for battle he first asked counsel of that God whom he desired to serve, and who had made him the Samson that he was. I am told that he and his venerable colleague, the Rev. Mr. Douglas, spent much time together in prayer before Mr. Owen's challenge was accepted. In the letter in which our friend takes up the gauntlet that had been thrown down to him as a Christian minister, there is not a shadow of that rancour and bitterness for which theological disputants are supposed to be so famous; the whole letter is not only as courteous as possible, but also glows with the writer's unconquerable kindness of disposition. In it he deplors that Mr. Owen has been refused the use of the Town Hall—expresses his wish that the authorities, instead of shutting their doors in Mr. Owen's face, had met him with sound arguments. Further, he says—

“Since ever I knew your name, and I have done so from very early life, I have been deeply penetrated with a con-

viction of your benevolent wishes towards the human family, and have often regretted that so much of human kindness should stand opposed to human redemption by the Son of God. I have visited your settlements at Lanark and Orbiston, and while I must have been blind not to see that there was much of comfort and cleanliness obtained by your plans, I could not help feeling that they were founded on sand, because not founded on Christianity."

Mr. Legg stipulated for two months for preparation. Mr. Owen not only granted him this, but generously lent all his works to his antagonist that he might become thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines he had to combat. During these two months of preparation the Church at Broad Street frequently met to pray for the success of their pastor. It is not the only time that that Church has besought and secured heavenly succour. May its courts never cease to resound with such prevailing supplication !

The 4th of March, 1839, was fixed for the discussion, for which the authorities consented to grant the use of their Town Hall. Admittance was to be given by tickets of a shilling each, and the proceeds were to go to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Before the eventful evening arrived these tickets rose to a premium ; the number of applicants for admission far exceeding what the hall would accommodate. We are told that "students from Oxford offered a guinea to aged females at the doors for their shilling tickets, and were refused." Proceedings commenced at six o'clock. Dr. Cowan was voted into the chair on the motion of Mr. Legg, seconded by Mr. Owen. Never was such a discussion conducted with greater courtesy. It was commenced by Mr. Owen, who occupied three-quarters of an hour with a lucid exposition of his principles. Point-

ing out the poverty, wretchedness, and wrong which are so fearfully prevalent in society as at present constituted, he contended that the labour which any number of persons are capable of is quite sufficient to procure for them as a community an abundance of the necessaries, and also of the comforts, of life; if all labour, and if the products of their labour be equally distributed, then every one may have more than a sufficiency, and live in comfort. He proposed the abolition of private property; that all land, stock, tools, etc., should be public property, should belong to the nation or community as a whole; and so also with the labour of each person, and the products of labour; officers appointed by the whole community apportioning the requisite labour, and equally distributing its fruits. He maintained that these principles of his, thoroughly worked, would not only put an end to poverty, but also do away with vice; that man was the creature of circumstances, and would naturally grow to be all that he should be, if brought up beneath the influence of the public and unselfish spirit which his (Mr. Owen's) system would foster; all such temptations being absent as those which now beset the down-trodden poor on the one hand, and the pampered rich on the other.

Mr. Legg then spoke, also for three-quarters of an hour. He contended that no society ever had flourished, or ever could flourish, without the salt of Christianity. He enforced his arguments by a rapid survey of all the great nations of antiquity that have now utterly passed away, and also by directing the attention of his audience to "Revolutionary France," where they voted "that there was no God," and that "death was an eternal sleep." "The experience," he said, "of 1800 years had proved that

Christianity was the salt of the earth, and that so long as a pious people were found in the land it was impossible to destroy it. They had facts to prove that even Mr. Owen himself had failed to establish a system without basing it on Christianity." He then referred to the settlement of New Harmony, and to other instances, in which Socialism had failed, and concluded with these words, "Look at the South Sea Islands, with all their atrocious barbarities, and their mysteries of nameless abominations, what system of philosophy could have accomplished the wonders wrought there?"

Mr. Owen then rose, and spoke for twenty minutes. He completed the setting forth of his peculiar doctrines, and amongst other things, contended that man was entirely a creature of circumstances, that his modes of conduct, and even his conscience, were all formed by the circumstances with which he was surrounded, and over which he had no control. He would place men under the government of his system, and then they would always act rightly, and would all be happy.

Mr. Legg rose again, and, in the course of his speech asked Mr. Owen how it was, seeing that the whole world was in error, that he (Mr. Owen), born and brought up surrounded by such irrationality, came to be possessed of such knowledge, which it seemed he monopolised? He could not have got it from man, and he did not claim to be inspired.

Both the disputants again spoke. It was, however, found impossible to close the discussion in one night, and the meeting resolved that it should be continued on the following evening.

Again the hall was crowded. At the same hour as on the preceding night the two champions appeared upon the

platform, and again got Dr. Cowan voted to the chair. Reading Town Hall never presented a much more solemn and striking appearance than it did on those two evenings! It was at that time lighted with wax candles; in the glitter of these appear hundreds of anxious faces, and surely other eyes besides those of that host of mortals are flashing their unswerving regard upon those two disputants and their impartial umpire. Some of the most solemn emotions that human hearts are capable of are throbbing in the hearts of that dense crowd, and the great cloud of spiritual witnesses who are surely looking down with equally ardent interest intensify those awful emotions by their own mysterious sympathy. The Chairman compliments the meeting upon its hitherto orderly conduct, and states the time that is to be allotted to each speaker. Mr. Owen then, in the midst of the greatest stillness, rises and re-opens the discussion. If his system has as yet done little, he asks, what has Christianity done during the eighteen hundred years of its existence. He trusts that his system will not take eighteen hundred, or even eighteen years, to alter the whole state of society, and make it what it never had been—no, nor ever would or could be under the present dispensation—happy. [Evidently Mr. Owen was no prophet.] He endeavours again to prove that man is entirely the creature of circumstances. He virtually denies the existence of sin and of conscience, defining crime as that action by which the largest amount of misery is inflicted upon individuals by their fellow-creatures. Thus the actions of a bad man are in no particular worse than the actions of a madman or a wild beast. He says, "I have been asked if I would treat a madman confined in Bedlam in the same manner that I

would treat the world; to this I would answer, that I consider the whole world as a great lunatic asylum, and I should therefore treat all alike. I should pity them both, and try to do both good." [The man's self-sufficiency keeps him from the suspicion that he himself may be afflicted with lunacy equally with all his fellow-men, and from doubting whether a lunatic, however amiable, is competent to cure a whole world-wide Bedlam, of which he is only an inmate.] He then denies that a man can believe what he likes, and says that this is the fundamental error upon which all governments, all laws, and all religions are based. [Mr. Owen's own good heart, which made him wish to set the whole world right, and then firmly believe he could do so, ought to have prevented this mistake.] He closes his speech by assailing in detail all existing forms of religion, civil government, and social organization.

Mr. Legg, in his reply, mainly dealt with the closing part of Mr. Owen's speech, expending his strength chiefly in defending Christianity, which his opponent had attacked on the ground that it was a religion of mysteries. He clearly showed how there must be mysteries in a true religion, and concluded by impressing upon his audience in glowing terms the limitations which are placed upon human knowledge until that day when we shall know even as we are known.

Mr. Owen again rose. He declared himself unable to comprehend the use of mysteries, and inferred that because he could not comprehend the use of mysteries, therefore they could not exist. [Did Mr. Owen believe in the existence of nettles, and earwigs, and such things?] He then very consistently denies the existence of sin, and hints that there cannot be a God because he cannot comprehend how evil and

an almighty and good God can exist together. He next reminds his audience how he has before demonstrated that a conscience of any kind can be manufactured in any infant, either Christian, Jew, Mahometan, or cannibal; and finishes up by saying, "The principle is the same—the character and the belief are produced by the circumstances in which the individual is placed. But I possess the knowledge which, if acted upon, will manufacture characters far superior to any possessed by any individual ever yet born."

The next speech of Mr. Legg is eminently characteristic of him. He is able to hit his antagonist very hard, and in the interest of truth intends to do so, yet he cannot bear the thought of causing pain, and spends some time in preparing Mr. Owen for the blow by frankly acknowledging his entirely disinterested and self-denying benevolence; and then he says, "While I thus admit that Mr. Owen has a large amount of benevolence, I cannot help thinking that he also possesses a large amount of self-esteem; for when he has, by a chemical process, fused all classes, the bishops, and archbishops, and the royal families, he is to re-construct, out of the same materials, the same number of grades, himself standing on the pyramid he has reared as the climax of the whole."

Mr. Owen again spoke for nearly three-quarters of an hour. He denied that he was influenced by any motive for future fame, any more than he was for present popularity. He set forth more fully the working of his system—tried to defend it from the imputation of having failed hitherto—he descanted for some time upon what he considered to be *the cause* of the evils of society, and at last returned to his fundamental difficulty: "He would say

broadly and boldly that all the sacred books ever written were based on this fundamental error—that man can form his own character and conduct, and this error was the cause of all the misery and vice which affected all classes, sects, and parties.”

Mr. Legg rose to reply for the last time, and amongst his closing remarks said: “We are now in possession of Mr. Owen’s system. His great doctrine appears to be, that man is the creature of circumstances, but the whole of Mr. Owen’s conduct here and elsewhere contradicts his theory. He writes to all governments to change their circumstances—to change their creator—for according to him circumstances make them; and yet he calls on all of us to *change* those circumstances. But is not that an impossibility, unless man has the power to act as he pleases? And this Mr. Owen denies.” Our friend concluded by saying, “I pray that Mr. Owen may yet turn from his errors, and that he may not have to appear before his Judge at the great day of account with his sins unrepented of, and his hands dripping with the blood of souls.”

Whether this prayer was answered God only knows; so far as we can tell, it would seem not. Mr. Owen, before he died, became a convert to spiritualism, and to the last declaring himself unable to believe in the Bible, became fully convinced that the existence of God, and of a life beyond the grave, is satisfactorily proved by spirit-rapping!

A striking examp^{le} of what shipwreck a good heart and a great mind may make, when the light of God’s revealed truth and the guidance of the Sun of Righteousness are rejected. We would fain think as charitably as possible of a man who manifested so much unquestionable benev-

lence, but Robert Owen dying a believer in spirit-rapping seems to compel our attention to some fearful words of Holy Writ about him "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God or worshipped," and about those who "received not the love of truth, that they might be saved;"—"for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

With a well-deserved vote of thanks to the chairman—Dr. Cowan—this memorable discussion ended. All felt that the victory rested with the champion of God's truth. Nor was this the award of mere religious bigotry or prejudice. Some most blessed facts proved the reality of Mr. Legg's triumph; more than one of those who witnessed his valiant vindication of the truth were thereby brought to a *saving* knowledge of that truth; and Owenism never lifted up its head in Reading after this defeat, in a very short time it died out and entirely disappeared.

The proceeds of the admission tickets were given to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, but an equal sum was shortly raised by subscriptions, not exceeding five shillings each, to present to our "advocate of Bible truth and social order." Persons of all denominations and of all classes of society in the town subscribed. A public meeting was held on the 18th of April, in the Town Hall, the scene of Mr. Legg's triumph. Dr. Ring presided, and Dr. Cowan presented the testimonial, which consisted of an elegant Bible, and a purse containing seventy guineas. In the Bible is the following inscription :—

AT A PUBLIC MEETING

HELD

IN THE TOWN HALL, READING,

ON

MONDAY, THE 15TH OF APRIL, 1839,

This Bible

ACCOMPANIED BY A PURSE CONTAINING SEVENTY GUINEAS

WAS PRESENTED TO

THE REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B.A.

BY NEARLY 500 SUBSCRIBERS,

As a Testimony of their respect for his able and Christian defence
of the great and glorious Truths which it contains, and as a Memorial
of his triumphant refutation of the demoralizing System and infidel
Opinions of

MR. ROBERT OWEN.

THOMAS RING, M.D. CHAIRMAN.

COMMITTEE.

CHARLES COWAN, M.D.

THOMAS CHAMPION.

HENRY F. LETCHWORTH.

CHARLES S. ROBINSON.

JAMES JOHNSON.

THOMAS LODGE.

RICHARD BUNCOMBE.

THOMAS ARIEL TAYLOR.

THOMAS LETCHWORTH.

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS.

SAMUEL CHASE.

But whilst the co-pastor of Broad Street Chapel was thus contending successfully against a mortal enemy in the sphere of spiritual verities, his aged and venerable colleague was struggling in a different sphere, with a far mightier foe, and with far different results. Whilst the younger pastor, in the maturity of his manhood, and before an applauding crowd of his fellow-mortals, was with fervid eloquence successfully contending for "the faith once delivered to the saints," the aged pastor, in the stillness of the

sick chamber, was parleying with the last great enemy of us all—death. I said the results of these two contests were very different, but that was a mistake ; for the old man, wrestling alone with death, obtained even a far better victory : he succeeded in tearing off the mask of his foe, and found beneath it the face of a most welcome friend, the face of an angel of light. And so true Christians always conquer, no matter how diverse may be the characters of the contests in which they struggle, or how different the apparent issues. A wonderful picture this :—In the sick chamber the white-headed pastor lies, almost too weak to speak ; his face, furrowed by age, and worn with much pain, rests helplessly upon the pillow. The younger pastor sits by his bedside in the fulness of health and strength, and with the flush of his recent victory still beaming upon his countenance, the plaudits of that crowded hall still ringing in his ears. Presently the stillness of the sick chamber is broken by a *very different sound* ; the old man, though with much difficulty, speaks to him ; “ Do you think I am dying ? ” he feebly asks. With unfeigned sadness the answer is given, “ I fear you are.” A sweet triumphant smile lights up that aged and pallid face, and the old Christian, as well as he can speak, exclaims, “ Oh, *fear* not ! I am longing to be gone.” Which was the greater conqueror ?

On the 26th of March the Rev. Archibald Douglas, “after having for 43 years discharged with fidelity the duties of the pastoral office to the church and congregation assembling in Broad Street Chapel, entered into his rest.” That day, in the presence of angelic hosts, he had bestowed upon him the crown of righteousness and the palm of victory, and amidst the loud harpings of heavenly choirs, heard the blessed commendation of his dear Redeemer, “ Well done, good and

faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." On the 18th of the next month the Rev. William Legg, now sole pastor of Broad Street Chapel, in the presence of a large assembly in Reading Town Hall, received, from the hands of Dr. Cowan, his Bible and purse. Surely, as yet the aged servant had obtained the better triumph and the better reward. Mr. Legg, nearly a fortnight before his testimonial was ready to be presented to him, was called upon to pronounce the funeral oration over the grave of his venerable colleague.



CHAPTER VI.

SIR JAMES GRAHAM'S "FACTORY BILL."

FOR many years after Mr. Douglas's death Mr. Legg lived a most active and laborious life. He now became sole pastor of Broad Street Chapel, and perhaps only one who has filled a similar position can form an adequate conception of how multifarious must have been his cares, how manifold and diverse his duties, and how incessant and onerous his toils. The Sunday afternoon service—still continued at Broad Street Chapel—then depended solely upon him. For many years he preached three times every Sabbath, and somehow or other still found time to prepare lessons for the Sunday School, conduct the week evening services, visit the sick, cultivate the personal friendship of his flock, take his part in the public matters of the town, and discharge all those other endless little nondescript duties that seem to inevitably devolve upon every public man and minister of the Gospel. And besides all this, there were the cares of a rapidly-increasing family, which, with a not too ample income, had to be provided for, and maintained in accordance with his social position. All these things must have made Mr. Legg's daily life eventful enough; but he kept no diary to chronicle its events; and doubtless for the most part they were of such a kind as are generally

not chronicled at all except in the great account-books of heaven. His life flowed on in a deep, strong, but monotonous current; watering many souls, dispensing richly the blessedness which was at its disposal, but doing all this mostly beneath the surface.

In 1843 England was agitated throughout its length and breadth by an education scheme finally matured and set forth in a Bill introduced into Parliament by Sir James Graham. It may be specially interesting to us just now, whilst we are anxiously watching to see how the great educational measure of last summer will work, to recall to mind the anxieties, and toils, and struggles of our fathers in this same matter. Before 1843 there had been several attempts to devise some scheme by which the education of the country should be made a matter of government support and government control. Sir James Graham's Factory Bill was another of these schemes, specially exciting at the time, and still very interesting for its thorough-going Toryism. "The people were shamefully ignorant; that perhaps did not matter so much; but they would be much more useful, they would produce so much more wealth if they were better educated." Thus spoke the politicians of the day. "Well," said Toryism, "where is the difficulty?" The Tory mind, in its simplicity, can rarely see a difficulty. Sir James Graham, a worthy exponent of the Tory mind, brought into Parliament his "Factory Bill," which at least possessed the very enviable virtue of *naïve* straightforwardness. In it he proposed to establish district schools throughout the country, and to attach to each school a chapel with a clergyman, who should teach the litany and catechism of the Church; the children of Dissenters, however, might

be exempted from attendance upon the clergyman's ministrations, and allowed to receive religious instruction from any licensed minister of their own denominations. It was proposed that the management of all such schools should be invested in seven persons, three of whom were to be the clergyman and two of the churchwardens of the parish, the remaining four being nominated by the local magistrates (that is to say, practically by the clergy in most rural districts). The expense of the schools was to be defrayed by an increase of the poor rate. It is evident that this Bill made a most invidious distinction between Episcopalians and Dissenters, and also between rich and poor. The education was to be provided for the lower classes, and they were of course bound to take what their betters thought fit to give them. They had, many of them, scruples about their children receiving religious instruction from ministers of the Established Church. What business had they to have such scruples? However, their betters would be indulgent, and by a rudimentary "conscience clause" give them the chance of getting their vulgar prejudices "tolerated." Now, all this was simple and natural enough to the Tory mind, which at that time was so constituted as scarcely to be capable of the preposterous supposition that the lower classes would refuse to receive a form of religion which was tendered to them by their betters, — which was indeed the religion patronised by their betters. Toryism is the direct offspring of Feudalism, and under the feudal system did not the lower classes exist for the special benefit of the upper classes? Was it not according to the law of nature "that the serf should work and obey his lord, and

that if he were insane enough to be idle or rebellious, then his lord must punish him?" Now, we know that the instincts of animals are transmitted to their offspring, and this though not unfrequently, altered circumstances make those instincts anything but useful. The offspring of a beaver admitted into a drawing-room would, in all probability, presently begin constructing a dam after the manner of its progenitors, using, instead of logs of trees, elegant chairs and tables, and battenning down with its tail ottomans and antimacassars, and fine Dresden vases instead of mud. Toryism inherits the instincts of Feudalism. True, a long continuance of unfavourable circumstances have considerably weakened and modified those instincts in English Toryism; yet, they exist, and will occasionally assert themselves. Just as one might suppose during that period of transition that seems necessary to elapse before the lion shall quietly lie down with the lamb, lions will often be troubled with a craving for mutton, and will every now and then greatly agitate the lambs by their side, by telling them that they have a perfect right to eat them, and feel very much inclined to do so. Now, this education bill of Sir James Graham's seemed to the poorer classes, and to all dissenters, very much like a proposition to be eaten; and all through the country they were not only very much agitated, but also very indignant. Meetings were held in every town to protest against the bill, and one was held in Reading. The Town Hall was packed. Dr. Andrew Reed came down from London "to give this meeting information respecting the state of the metropolis upon this vital question;" and during his speech he declares himself happy to be able to tell them "that London is up to the mark; that from the centre

to the extremities of that great city one conviction of the cruel injustice of this bill prevails, and one feeling of determined resistance to it is universally manifested." Feeling interested in the subject, I have read through all the speeches made in Reading Town Hall on that exciting occasion, and not one of them seems to me at all equal to that made by the pastor of Broad Street Chapel. I cannot refrain from giving our friend's speech almost at length ; not only as a proof of his oratorical talent, but also to show the reader what a power of indignation the man was capable of against injustice and oppression. He thus begins :—

"SIR,—We are not entitled to call any man wretched because he is a mechanic, or because he has been ground down by adverse circumstances ; we are not entitled to call any man wretched, whatever else he may suffer in pain inflicted or pleasure denied, who has a child for whom he hopes, of whose destiny he is the only being on earth who has the supreme control, whose education he feels he has the only right to promote according to his views—a child from whom he dare not alienate a father's solicitude, or trust the training of his moral nature to any governor or any priest. Poverty may grind him to the dust, obscurity may cast her darkest shadow over him, his face may be unknown to his neighbours, his voice unheeded by the people among whom he dwells ; pain may rack his joints from excessive labour and sleep may flee from his pillow : but in that child he has a gem with which he would not part for wealth defying computation, for fame filling the world's ear, for the luxury of highest health, or the sweetest sleep that ever sat upon a mortal eye. But this child is to be wrested from him and driven to a factory school, his own wages extorted for teaching him against his will, while neither he nor his neighbours who are rated for the purpose of tyranny shall have any control over the collection or appropriation of these rates. Sir, this is touching Englishmen in the two points where they feel most

sensitively—their consciences and their pockets. It was bad enough that they could come and distrain our goods for a church with which we have no sympathy; it is too bad to distrain our children too. It is bad enough that we should have an Anglo-Prussian government. Sir, we have always been governed by our own princes and our own laws, and may God preserve the Princess who now so happily fills the throne from putting her hand to a document that would reduce her subjects to the condition of Prussian serfs. Sir, I would fain examine the claims and the qualifications of the Church of England to be the supreme instructress of the people. If it is to the question I will do so (cries of "yes, yes"). Well, then, in doing so it seems I am not going out of my way. Indeed, the legislators have put her fairly forward, and ask us, as it were, what we think of her high pretensions and fitness in this respect. Now, sir, I am happily aware of the existence of the Low Church, or much despised Evangelical party. They are strangers in their own mother's house, but their works praise them in the gate. I rejoice to know that under the plain coat of many a vicar and curate, as well as under a bishop's robe, has beat a heart glowing with love to Christ and souls. These men have been ashamed when the Church has acted the part of oppressor and executioner, but they have never been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. These men I praise and honour. But I ask Lord William Howley and Lord Charles James Blomfield, and the large section of the Church to which they belong, how they dare act the impertinent part in the face of their country, and towards dissenters, as to claim for that Church the supreme instructress-ship of the people. I would press these gentlemen with a few historical questions: Have they preached the Gospel in the streets, and lanes, and markets, and dens of sorrow? Have they been chaplains except at the luxurious tables of the rich? Have they been found at the bedside of squalid misery pouring out the balm of consolation into the dying ear? Have they had *any* intercourse with squalid wretchedness except to tithe its potatoes? Have we not seen their Church brandishing a blood-stained scourge over the famished bodies of the Irish people? And will you have her as the supreme

instructress of the people? Did the High Church aid us in emancipating the slaves? No; your apostolical successors rose against the measure to one man. Has she carried the Gospel to the heathen? No; not one of the celebrated list of missionaries belonged to her communion. Where is the flock that she has gathered? You see it in the congregated masses of last August. Its voice has been heard in a wail of sorrow causing Europe to resound, "More bread and fewer bishoprics! more Bibles and fewer bayonets! more employment and fewer priests!" But whence this new-born zeal in the Church in behalf of education? The people were leaving her in crowds—her influence was pining away.

William III. took the scourge from her hand by the Toleration Act; the Catholic Emancipation Bill was another dreadful blow; the Reform Act was passed sorely against her will in 1832, and was followed in rapid succession by the suppression of ten bishoprics in Ireland; and at length by the Marriage Act, which, besides causing the spirit of ballad poetry to descend upon the banks of the Cam, had this other effect of striking the Church in her vitals, that is, in her temporalities. And now the effort is made to recover lost ground. The chimerical theories of Pusey, and Newman, and Gladstone, and the practical theory of Graham, have all one cause and one object—it is to crush dissent and restore the happy days of ancient Anglicanism. But let them beware. Though you, after examination, deny emphatically her claims and qualifications to be our supreme instructress; these theorists cry out that had it not been for us the operatives would have deemed themselves most happy to have received the proffered boon,—that having planted their tree of life in this second paradise within the pale, the mechanics would have been seen flocking into it, had not a mischievous host of demagogues and Methodists, and agitators of every description planted themselves like a flaming sword, and coming every way, precluded their entrance. What is the boon? Why, Sir James Graham comes forward, and in the name of the Church says to Manchester, Stalybridge, Stockport, and Leeds, "You may have employment, and food, and clothing, and catechism, and liturgy into the bargain by paying for it, if you

will only be so good, in addition to the payment, to divest yourselves of the trifling rights of freedom. Well, let Sir James go on with this proposal; I will not, lest the young spirity rogues in these factories should stone me, or lest the Amazonian damsels, their companions, in the exuberance of their thankfulness and affection should rush upon me and tear me in pieces. And even were we to propose this boon to the parents who have attained wisdom by experience, and whose spirit is sobered by age, I am afraid we should receive some such reply as this, 'Our countrymen the Hampdens, the Pymms, the Vanes, the Eliots, the Martins, on the floor of parliament, and on the high fields of England, fought and bled for freedom; they planted among us the tree of liberty, watered it with their prayers and tears, defended it with their lives, and nourished it with their blood; with their dying breath they bequeathed it us as their richest legacy; we have long sat under its shadow with great delight, and have found its fruits, both civil and religious, sweet to our taste, and therefore, sooner than permit any hand of tyranny or despotism, foreign or domestic, whether from Prussia or Cumberland, to injure this tree under which we sit, either in root or branch, we could shed the last drop of Saxon or Scottish blood that circulates in our veins.' Mr. Chairman, Sir James Graham is a lineal descendant of Claverhouse, who dyed the Scottish heather with the blood of martyrs, and he is showing that he is not the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto us. No; his name will go down with that of his worthy ancestor covered with infamy to the latest period to which English history shall be read. I denounce these educational clauses as a series of outrages upon the laws of the realm, the principles of the constitution, and the liberties of the subject. And I denounce the man who dares to insult the British people by proposing them. Arbitrary, insidious, and unrelenting, he is—if there be any meaning in the term—a *tyrant*, and to speak of him as being anything less, is to condemn the laws which he seeks to trample on, the constitution which in so many respects he wishes to violate, but which is the pride and birthright of every Englishman, the basis of the throne, and, under God, the security of the true religion."

What the Dissenters really objected to in this education scheme of Sir James Graham's was not so much government *education*, but government support of the Established Church, and government disregard of their liberty of conscience, or, what was almost as bad, contemptuous "toleration" of that liberty. For if Episcopalian Toryism has its instincts inherited from Feudalism, Free Church Liberalism has also its inherited instincts due originally to such things as the Corporation Act, the Act of Uniformity, the Conventicle Act, the Free Will Act, the Tests Act. These instincts have always more or less led Dissenters to see in every government scheme of education a threatened encroachment upon their religious liberty; nor have their suspicions and fears ever been without very plausible grounds. Thus there grew up in the minds of Dissenters a positive hostility to government education *per se*. I have an interesting example of this amongst the papers before me. One of them contains an account of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire Congregational Association meetings, held at Reading in May, 1852, just when the country was excited by Lord Russell's famous Education Bill. The Rev. Andrew Reed, B.A., of Norwich, son of Dr. Andrew Reed, who had spoken at the meeting in 1843, attended these association meetings as a deputation from the Congregational Board of Education. Lord Russell's Bill was a very different measure from that of Sir James Graham's. Its main principle consisted in the assistance and development of existing schools by government grants, and that altogether irrespective of the form of religion taught in them. But the Dissenters opposed it almost to a man; those who thought most deeply about the matter, because it was contrary to their principles

to take national money to teach religion themselves, or to pay any rate which would, in part at least, be expended in teaching religious doctrines with which they did not agree. They believed it unjust that they should be obliged to pay for the teaching of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic doctrines, and equally unjust to take the money of Episcopalians and Roman Catholics to enable them to teach their own characteristic doctrines.

Such in the main was the objection which the deputation, Mr. Reed, urged against Lord Russell's Bill; but most of the other speakers hated it simply because it was a government education scheme. This appears to have been the case with our friend. It seems as if the feelings of disgust and indignation which Sir James Graham's Bill aroused within him had not yet died out; only now, having no very definite wrong upon which to concentrate, they expended themselves upon the broad fact of the government attempting to undertake the education of the people at all.

Mr. Legg spoke with all his usual eloquence, so much so that against one's conviction one is almost brought to believe that the government really cannot find proper education for the people, and has no business to do so. Yet, from a careful reading of the speeches made on that occasion, and taking them, as one well may, as expressing the general sentiments of Dissenters of that day upon government education, it seems evident that could the *bête noire* of religious proselytism be eliminated from government education, Dissenters would no longer in any way have objected to it. Whether this *bête* has been got rid of in

the present scheme, only experience will show ; and it is altogether evident that the success of the scheme will mainly depend just upon that.



CHAPTER VII.

TROUBLES.

THE years 1846 and 1847 were both of them full of trials for the pastor of Broad Street Chapel. In the early part of 1846 troubles in the church, that had been for some time fermenting, came to a crisis by three of the deacons sending in their resignation. Soon after they left the chapel, and a considerable portion of the congregation left with them. These seceders in course of time formed themselves into a new church and built Trinity Chapel in Queen's Road. Thus a third Independent Church was formed in Reading. Whatever painful feelings there were caused by this secession, they soon subsided. The quarrel was but a quarrel of lovers, and was soon followed by a renewal of love. Whatever fault the seceders had to find with Mr. Legg, they did not refuse him their continued respect and esteem ; and whatever pain Mr Legg might have felt at their withdrawal from his ministry, he was far from resenting it. At the opening of their new chapel, he, at their special request, took a prominent part in the ceremonies of the day, and the good-will thus renewed between the two peoples, now become two churches, has never been interrupted.

Whilst these troubles in Mr. Legg's church were going on, a dark cloud that had for some time been settling over his

household grew blacker and blacker, threatening the profoundest gloom. His beloved wife, his gentlest and best of counsellors, his fondest companion, and the mother of his nine children, was sickening with cancer. She had been now for fifteen years the best helper he had had in his pastoral duties; she had been the light of his home; the one prop and stay of his household; she was his best beloved; and those long weary months, through which he watched her gradually and surely sinking, must have been months of such darkness and anguish as only the love of his Master and Lord, who loved him better even than father or mother or wife, could render at all endurable. At last the end came. In the dark days of the December of 1847, the light of his household expired. We cannot lift the veil from his profound and sacred grief. Sacred we know it was, for he walked not alone through this fiery furnace; there was One with him wearing the form of the Son of God. On the 10th of December, Mrs. Legg was interred at Broad Street Chapel. Her friend, and her husband's friend, the Rev. Dr. Morrison, delivered the funeral address to a large and deeply-affected audience. Mr. Legg emerged from this terrible affliction to find himself a widower with all the care of nine young children resting upon him. With his native strength of mind and heart uncrushed through God's preserving grace, he was able to brace himself up and recommence the battle of life.

Scarcely had our friend at all recovered from this heavy sorrow, when death again visited his household. He had living with him for many years two of his beloved wife's sisters, these assisted him in the management of his household, and in the education of his children. One of them,

Miss Alexandrina Kennedy came to him immediately after his marriage. She had not been long in Reading when she caught a severe cold, which developed into asthma. This disease never left her ; she gradually grew worse and worse, and for years was an almost helpless invalid. Tenderly, with all brotherly affection he sheltered her and cared for her until death bore her away to a far better home, and to the everlasting enjoyment of her great Elder Brother's infinitely better love.

These domestic sorrows and cares were all borne by Mr. Legg with truly admirable fortitude. Beneath them all he was always found cheerful and kind and gentle. With the slender income of a dissenting minister he for many years supported his two sisters-in law ; through a long and trying illness he provided every comfort for one of them ; and at the same time he brought up and thoroughly educated his large family, until he got them all comfortably and honourably settled in life. He did all this with a calmness and kindness that made him almost as much beloved by all who knew him as by his own household. Often in those things which least obtrude themselves upon public notice the real worth of a man's character is most evident. As a father, a brother, and a friend, none who knew Mr. Legg could help both respecting and loving him. More than once I have heard him say with a genial smile, "all the money I ever got I spent in feeding and clothing and educating my children, and in charity ;" and those words, with the smile that accompanied them, first led me to love the man.

CHAPTER VIII.

YEAR OF JUBILEE.

THE years 1850 and 1851 formed a striking contrast in Mr. Legg's history to those of 1846 and 1847. The burden of these appears to have consisted mainly of happiness and prosperity, instead of sorrow and sickness and death. The sky was comparatively unclouded both in public and in domestic matters ; in both spheres his life through these two years was very bright and sunny. "There is a tide in the affairs of men." The years 1846 and 1847 were remarkable for an unusual ebb in the tide of Mr. Legg's happiness, these two years were as remarkable for an unusual flow, and especially did this flow manifest itself in his church affairs. The troubles that had culminated in the secession of 1846 soon passed away, and then a period of unusual prosperity set in. Many were added to the church, so that it speedily became more numerous than it was before.

Moreover, the year 1850 was a year of jubilee for the Broad Street people. The present chapel had been erected in 1800. Its existence for half a century had been connected with many very hallowed and very interesting experiences in the lives of those who had worshipped God within its walls. The completion of those fifty years was felt to be an event well worthy of special celebration. Accordingly, Monday, the

2nd of December, was set apart by the Broad Street friends for thanking God and taking courage.

At 11 o'clock a public meeting was held, at which the Rev. George Clayton, of Walworth, delivered a most able and interesting discourse to a crowded assembly in the chapel. He based his remarks upon Numbers xxiii, 23. In the course of his sermon, he said :—

“You are called to look back upon the time when your beginnings were small. The origin of this interest may be traced to the time of the rejection of many conscientious men from the church as by law established in these realms, by the Act of Uniformity. One of those clergymen was ejected from St. Mary's, and others who took the oversight of this church from neighbouring towns or cities. Hence this cause originated, and God has sustained it for more than 200 years. This is its fourth jubilee : but your attention is now more particularly to be directed to the period when this place of worship was reared. I have a distinct recollection of the old Chapel, where, for some years of my life, I worshipped. I recollect the old vestry (pointing to the spot) where we used to meet for the purpose of holding social prayer, and the minister and deacons, who were always present, were surrounded by many of our congregational friends. Some of them have fallen asleep, but a few continue to this day. Will you forgive a personal reference, when I say, that the first time these lips opened with fear and trembling to offer a prayer was in the old chapel, and some of you can give me credit when I say that the amount of painful feeling connected with that first exercise was more than I can describe. My knees shook together, and my joints and loins were loose when the first prayer was offered in the vestry of the old chapel. I can only say that by the help of God I continue till this day. The death of the Rev. Mr. Cadogan, of St. Giles', took place simultaneously with the acquaintance which I was happy to form with the town of Reading, when I was a pupil of the late Dr. Valpy. By the death of that excellent man, whose fame was to a con-

siderable degree catholic, not a few used to find their way for the bread of life to Broad Street Chapel, and the influx to the congregation became so considerable that it was thought desirable to provide greater accommodation for those who were willing to attend, and hence the pious design arose in the bosom of not a few to raise this house for God. In those days it was a great undertaking ; we had not so much of chapel building then as now ; it was looked upon with fear and trembling by those who undertook it, but it was raised, it was opened, it was paid for, it has been enlarged, and it continues to the present hour to be 'the house of God,' and, I trust, the 'gate of heaven.' The services of that day are fresh in my recollection, and doubtless of a few who are now present. My beloved and revered father, the Rev. John Clayton, of the Weigh-house Chapel, London, preached the morning sermon, in which he endeavoured to show that the truest patriotism consisted in having a due regard to the sanctuary of God, and to the manner of His house ; his text was—'He hath loved our nation and built us a synagogue.' He was followed in the afternoon by the Rev. John Hinton, of Oxford—a man of distinguished talent, and whose memory is still fragrant in the church—who preached from the words 'the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former.' And in the evening, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, of Battersea, attempted a practical improvement of all that had gone before by presenting to his hearers that impressive inquiry, "will ye also be my disciples?" in which he sought to fix the choice and affection of the people to this spot, and to the valued ministry and institutions of God within these walls. Each of these faithful and honoured instruments have been removed from our world ; they are gone to shine and serve in other spheres, but it is not too much to suppose that their happy spirit may be looking over the battlements of heaven, and taking a spiritual interest in the transactions of this important season."

A tea meeting was held in the afternoon at the New Hall, in London Street, which has since been fitted up as a chapel and occupied by the Primitive Methodists. The churches

of the town and neighbourhood largely sympathised with the Broad Street people in their rejoicings, and the hall was crowded; as many as 700 sat down to tea. At the meeting that followed Mr. Legg read a history of the Broad Street Church from its origin in 1662; this he afterwards elaborated and published. After the reading of this document, the meeting was addressed by the Rev. James Sherman, of Surrey Chapel, London, for several years the minister of St. Mary's Chapel, Castle Street, before it passed into the hands of the Episcopalians. Other addresses were given by the Rev. Dr. Jenkyn, President of Coward College, London, the Rev. W. Harris, of Wallingford, the Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, the Rev. S. Curwen, of Castle Street Independent Chapel, the Rev. J. J. Brown, of King's Road (Baptist), and the Rev. T. Hodson (Wesleyan). The Rev. G. Clayton spoke also at this evening meeting. At the close of his speech, turning to Mr. Legg, whom he regarded with all the tenderness of long-trying and very warm friendship, he thus touchingly addressed him:—

“ You have to-day heard things almost crushing to you, and I pity you; but you have reached the meridian of life; you have had many counter-balancing sorrows, and perhaps many things you have heard will compensate you for the trials you have passed through both in your public ministry and at home. It ill becomes me to re-open wounds which we all hope have been closed, but I must say in sympathizing with you and the nine who have been bereaved of one of the best and kindest of parents, that I trust those nine hopeful, beautiful, and dear children will be at the last day nine gems in your crown of glory—that they will all be given to your pious efforts, and put you in the position of a new parentage—and that they may add to the radiance of that crown which it will be your honour to cast at the feet of your Redeemer for ever.”

The Jubilee was further celebrated on the following Wednesday by a tea meeting of all the scholars of Broad Street Chapel, numbering nearly 300. "The Rev. W. Legg was present, and several friends; interesting and encouraging addresses were delivered, and the occasion altogether was one of much joy and gratification to the whole party. The respected minister told the children, on separating, that he had never attended a meeting of young people in which he had experienced so much delightful and hallowed feeling as on that evening."

And so—with those delightful and hallowed feelings, which his Sunday School children inspired, still filling his heart, revered by a loving and rejoicing people, with the sweet accents of tender and honourable friendship still making melody in his ears—the year 1850, the jubilee year not only of Broad Street Chapel, but of his own life, passed away.



CHAPTER IX.

TESTIMONIALS.

THE year 1851 is memorable in the history of Broad Street Chapel as a year of testimonials. It began in a testimonial vein. The evening of New Year's Day found the chapel school-room crowded. There was of course a tea-drinking; and then the assembly with exhilarated sobriety settled down to the pleasing ceremony of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Brain, who had for many years been the leader of the chapel choir, and otherwise a most helpful servant of Christ in their midst. The presentation consisted of an elegant tea service of plate, upon which was to be found the following inscription:—"This service is presented to Mr. Brain by the church and congregation of Broad Street Chapel, Reading, in testimony of their high esteem for him as a Christian, of their admiration of his musical ability, and of their deep gratitude for the disinterested and superior manner in which he has conducted their psalmody for so many years. January 1st, 1851."

Mr. Legg presented the testimonial. His speech on this occasion was as silvern as the tea service which it was his pleasure to present. It may be taken as a fair illustration of how genial and tender his feelings towards his people always were, and of how kindly it was his wont to speak to

them and deal with them. As such I take the liberty of presenting it to the reader :—

“My dear sir,” said he, “I have had many happy meetings with you during the space of very nearly twenty years, but, during that long period, never one of an opposite description. The suavity of your manners, the sunshine of your countenance, and the fixedness of your principles, have always been to me sources at once of activity and repose. In all the relations in which you have stood to me, my heart has confided in you, well knowing that your generous nature would discover or invent an excuse for my manifold infirmities. Nor can I forget how soothing and acceptable were your sympathies and prayers, as well as those of a brother joined with you in another office, to a gentle spirit that has long fled from our circle, but who, if she is permitted to look down on the engagements of this evening, will feel it to be an enhancement of her heavenly joys. Long before she was called away from us she urged that the duty we are now so tardily performing, should be done. Let no one suggest that this scene is too trivial to arrest the attention of celestial immortals, for this is a meeting of purest brotherly love, and ‘he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.’ But, whatever be the capacity of our departed friends to sympathise in our affairs, we know that the occasion of our meeting is one of great pleasure to all assembled here. To myself this is one of the bright spots which memory will embalm. Not because of any intrinsic value in the token of which, in the name of this church and congregation, I shall have to beg your acceptance, but because this hour allows us to give expression to a gratitude that has long been felt, and to feelings that have been made to wait too long for utterance. We are glad, for your sake and our own, that Providence has rendered it quite unnecessary that we should ever have thought of seeking to engage for gold those musical powers which we have so long gratuitously enjoyed in conducting our praise of Him ‘from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.’ But if, instead of employing those powers with which He has so richly endowed you, in leading the songs of Zion, you had made your election to employ

them professionally, I do not know that there is any degree of fame or emolument that you might not have achieved. Happy for our Sabbath services, and happy for our prayer-meetings, from which (though it must often be at no small inconvenience) you are rarely, if ever, absent, that your choice was otherwise directed. We have heard of occasional discord in choirs, but happily we have never heard of it in our own, not even so much as that which scientific men tell us is needed to produce harmony: and we believe that for this we are indebted at once to your prudence and the good sense and ability of your coadjutors. It has become fashionable of late to decry all repeating tunes, though some of them are the most effective, lest leaders should marry the music to an ill-adapted verse, but in all these years I have never heard an instance here of a line being disjointed by an infelicitous choice. So that, after all, the repeating tune is but like a sharp weapon in the hand of a child. Let it be but under its master, and it will serve as tractably as the simplest and gravest melody of them all. I hope you may long continue to aid our devotions and encourage our hearts. There is no image of the past more marked in my remembrance than the form of your beloved father in that same singing gallery, with his ever quiet, unruffled, and pious bearing; and never did he quit that post till he was called to the choirs above. May you, your beloved wife, and family, long be spared to enjoy the recollection of this evening as our little token of affection and gratitude stands, from time to time, in the middle of the unbroken family group; and when, at a very distant day, your mantle shall fall, may it descend upon one not only kindred in blood, in spirit, and in musical talent, but may he also be a sharer with you in the grace of life. In the name of the whole church and congregation I beg your acceptance of this small token of great gratitude and esteem."

The Broad Street people having begun the year by presenting a testimonial to their friend and brother Mr. Brain, went on in the same course from good to better. They proceeded to get up a suitable testimonial to their beloved

pastor, whose ministrations they had now enjoyed for twenty years. By the 21st of August all preparations were completed, and that day was fixed for the ceremony. That day must indeed have been a proud and happy one for our friend. The expression of approbation and affection is always pleasing to those to whom it is offered, but it must be peculiarly so when it comes from those over whom a man has yearned for many years with all the deep and sacred yearnings of a Christian minister, caring for them and toiling for them with more than brotherly, and more than parental devotion ; and when it is further enriched with the commendation of the honourable and the revered, it must be grateful indeed. All the deep gratification that such commendation could afford was on this day realized by Mr. Legg. The proceedings of the day, or rather of the evening, commenced with a tea meeting, which was held in the chapel, as it was feared the school-room would not be large enough to accommodate the company expected. A temporary platform was formed for the occasion by laying planks upon the tops of the pews. Mr. Legg's old and tried friends, the Rev. Dr. Morison and the Rev. George Clayton, were amongst those present. When tea was finished, Dr. Morison was voted into the chair. Our friend, all his young family with him, sat on the chairman's right. Upon a table before the chairman was the testimonial, which consisted of a handsome silver tea service with a beautiful purse containing 110 guineas. The teapot bore the following inscription :—

**THIS TEA SERVICE,
THE MEMORIAL OF A LOVING PEOPLE'S REGARD,
WAS PRESENTED, TOGETHER WITH
A PURSE OF 110 GUINEAS,
TO THE REV. WILLIAM LEGG, B.A., MINISTER OF
BROAD STREET CHAPEL, READING,
ON 31ST JULY, 1851,
IN TESTIMONY OF THEIR GROWING RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE,
AFTER 20 YEARS OF FAITHFUL AND DEVOTED
PASTORAL SERVICE.**

The chapel was crowded. Dr. Morison rose and stated the business of the evening, speaking with much kindness, and with all his usual ability. Amongst other things he alluded to the fact of its having been he that first introduced Mr. Legg to the church at Broad Street. "He might be allowed to say to them," he remarked, "that the circumstances of his having introduced to that society his respected friend the beloved pastor over that church, greatly tended to increase the feelings of interest and regard which he cherished towards the religious society of the place. They were all more or less influenced by particular friendships which they had formed—which they had long cherished—which had been a source of real delight and real benefit to their minds. He delighted to think that a letter which had been written by him with no undue measure of kindness, was the occasion (he believed it was) of his esteemed friend coming among them; and when he thought of his career during the period of his co-pastorate with the late Archibald Douglas, and of the success which had attended his labours since that honoured servant of the Redeemer had been called to a

heavenly world, he felt, perhaps, as one was not always allowed to feel, that if he had to write that letter again, he should do it with as hearty a confidence as he cherished when he penned it. He knew that he was only speaking the feelings of the assembly when he said that their respected friend had lived in the town to prove that Divine Providence had placed him there—that the adored Head of the Church had been pleased to sustain and sanction his labours by giving him no mean share of success in the work to which he had been called.” . . . But “he would not divert their attention from the address of his reverend friend and brother Mr. Clayton, who had been so long associated with the tenderer destinies of Reading, and who, he knew, loved their friend on his right ; and who could that evening perform the duty imposed upon him in such a manner as would render it instructive and interesting to all their minds.”

The Rev. George Clayton then rose, and spoke with much eloquence and pathos. During the course of his speech he said :—

“It is now twenty years, or nearly so, since my esteemed brother in the chair and myself met in this place on the solemn occasion of the ordination of the Rev. William Legg to the pastoral office over this people. On looking back to the period that is past, noting the manner in which our beloved friend has been enabled to fulfil his ministry, we may justly say, ‘What hath God wrought!’ You know better than I do, and you come forward to attest with what knowledge, what judgment, what patience, what gentleness, what fervour, what earnestness, what continued and indefatigable assiduity, the duties of that ministry have been fulfilled.”

At the close of his speech, having read a copy of the inscription, Mr. Clayton formally presented the testimonial

to Mr. Legg, who then rose to return thanks. He spoke with almost his usual calmness, though evidently under the influence of deep emotion. He began by thanking those "two honoured men by his side for coming to grace that celebration by their presence, and to warm their hearts by their sympathies." "He reminded them that twenty years ago they had both taken principal parts when he knelt on that spot to receive ordination from 'the hands of the presbytery;' that Mr. Clayton had then upheld him from sinking under the pressure of great weakness arising from recent personal affliction which had well-nigh terminated his course there at its commencement." He thanked his people for the joy they had given him in cheerfully co-operating with him in all his plans of usefulness. They were not a people who thought that the work of extending the gospel should be left to the ministers alone—a thought which, wherever it had prevailed, had stricken, as with a palsy, the church of Christ. He would thank them for their personal exertions to promote the objects he had ever had in view. He had heard of a man who was afflicted with a very singular complaint—no power of motion; he could think and devise benevolent plans, but he had not a member of his body that could be brought into play for the execution of them; and in proportion as he deemed them important was his grief great at finding them formed in vain. Now he was not in that condition. If he was the head of that congregation, he had the members more active than himself, ready both to participate and encourage in the discharge of every necessary and arduous duty. For this he was thankful; as a cold congregation would freeze him. Some writers had mentioned a flower that even in the polar

regions opened its leaves and diffused its fragrance amidst everlasting snows ; they said, however, that such a flower was rare, though it might be found in abundance under happier skies. He did not pretend to be a flower at all, but only the scion of a northern pine transplanted into their warmer and more genial clime, and if any virtue had been diffused by him, he owed it much to their genial and fostering warmth. He would also thank them for the kind manner in which all through his residence among them they had supplied everything absolutely necessary to meet his wants. He had heard of some who spoke with gratification of the pleasure of a minister being independent of his people, but that was a happiness he had never contemplated, and he believed that Christ and his apostles had never contemplated being independent of those to whom they ministered in holy things. For himself he was content to be dependent upon his people, as a medical man upon his patients, or as a lawyer upon his clients. . . . He never wished to live either like a prince or a mendicant ; the former he did not desire, the latter it was his endeavour not to deserve. . . . But above all he thanked them for their prayers. He felt entirely dependent upon the grace of God, and he believed that grace came to him greatly through his people's prayers offered up with an earnestness that Heaven could not refuse to hear. He concluded an eloquent speech by warmly thanking his people for their munificent gift.

Dr. Morison, in rising again to call upon the next speaker, made reference to his and Mr. Legg's early acquaintance with each other. He said that their fathers had been fast friends ; that their fathers' names still lived in that part of the north where they had resided—that their memories

would be found fresh and fragrant, and be cherished to the latest posterity for the efforts which they had made to establish Sunday schools in their locality. He had a little the advantage of Mr. Legg in years, but he remembered very well what he was like as a boy. He cherished the remembrance of their boyish friendship, and rejoiced in the way in which it had ripened, and he especially rejoiced that it had now for so many years been strengthened by the stronger and more sacred bonds of Christian love and of service in the same holy ministry.

Dr. Morison then called upon the Rev. J. J. Brown of King's Road Chapel to address the meeting. The Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, spoke next, and after him the Rev. S. Curwen, of Castle-street Chapel. The name of Mr. Curwen is still revered in Reading; his memory is still fragrant as that of a deeply pious and a very gifted minister of the truth. I cannot here refrain from reproducing some of those sentiments which Mr. Curwen gave expression to in his speech. "The Rev. S. Curwen," says the newspaper report, "declared how difficult it was for him to express his feelings on that occasion. He had always known his brother Legg as a true-hearted man. He had seen him under a variety of circumstances. He had seen him in all the enjoyment of peace, comfort, and domestic prosperity—he had seen him in great sorrow of heart—had stood by him in a great fight of affliction—had watched with him by the side of his dying wife—travelled with him to the house of mourning—seen him in great sadness of spirit, yet never saw him forsake his confidence in God, or say an unkind word against his people. He had seen him in circumstances of deep provocation, yet he had never been bitter or angry. . . . He was

delighted with that manifestation of goodwill towards his brother. In fact he took it almost as a personal compliment to himself."

After Mr. Curwen had spoken, a hymn was sung, and then the Rev. G. Clayton, in a few earnest words of praise and supplication, led the hearts of the assembly to the throne of the God of all goodness, and thus most appropriately closed the proceedings of the day.

Mr. Legg retired with his family to the quiet of his own home. What were his thoughts and feelings as he mused upon the happy proceedings of that evening? What effect had all that congratulation, all that outpouring of affection, upon him? These secret musings of the heart form the most interesting part of a man's life, but, as a kind of first-fruits, they are entirely consecrated to God. In them the good man's heart burns, but seldom does the smoke of the incense escape in any degree beyond the veil of the inner sanctuary; it rises in hallowed secrecy before the Shekinah of God's indwelling, and not even those who frequent the inner courts of the man's affections are often delighted with that most sacred of sweet-smelling savours. The incense of this good man's musings that night belonged to God alone, and doubtless the savour thereof was very sweet.

During the evening reference was made to a letter from Mr. Justice Talfourd, who had contributed a handsome donation towards the testimonial fund. Mr. Talfourd was a native of Reading, and a man of whom not only his birth-place, but all England has much reason to be proud. He was possessed of great natural ability and of high cultivation, and was equally liberal and warm-hearted. He rose to high eminence, not only in the profession to which he was

specially devoted, but he perhaps equally distinguished himself in literature ; and also, whilst representing his native borough in Parliament, he proved himself very proficient in statesmanship. His tragedy of "Ion" and his "Memorials of Charles Lamb," are works that will last. "The Custody of Infants Act," and "The Copyright Act," which he introduced and carried through Parliament, are two measures of acknowledged usefulness ; and his dying words, equally honourable to him as a man and as an English Judge, ought not yet to be forgotten. As he was addressing the grand jury at the Stafford assizes, he was suddenly seized with a fit of apoplexy, and died almost before he could be carried out of court. In his address he was lamenting the want of a genuine kindly relation between employers and employed, and the last words he ever uttered were these :—" *If I were to be asked what is the great want of English society, I would say in one word, the want of sympathy between class and class.*" This noble utterance was altogether in harmony with his whole life and character. Mr. Talfourd was the grandson of the Rev. T. Noon, a former minister of Broad Street Chapel, and the son of one of its deacons. Mr. Legg had thus become acquainted with his family, and very well known to Mr. Talfourd himself. What with family matters, and political matters, and Mr. Talfourd's interest in the Broad Street Chapel, there had been a good deal of intercourse between him and our friend, and this intercourse was productive of very much mutual esteem. Accordingly, Mr. Talfourd had been asked to contribute towards Mr. Legg's testimonial. The letter written in reply to that request I have before me, and venture to give an extract. After explaining an unavoidable delay in answering the applicant's note, he says :—

"It would be very painful to me to think that, even during the interval, you could regard me as treating with silent neglect *any* communication from *you*, and especially a communication in which sentiments of respect to one of the best men I have ever known are involved. . . . I believe a man more urbane, more generous, and more true, more framed by nature and more disposed by principle to blend the amenities of the gentleman with the graces of a Christian than your minister has rarely advanced the cause of either Church or Dissent; and I am happy to know that, in his case, the authority which I believe ought to exist in a minister of Christ independent of and above his flock, is—and I hope will be ever—supplied in this case by the affection and reverence of his grateful and revering supporters. You will perceive I write to you freely, as one who disowns "the voluntary principle," but my very objection to it renders me more happy to concur in that spontaneous respect for a minister which has in it elements of permanence and veneration which may supply its place. [Of course we Dissenters say not "may" but ought to; and where it does not, anything else is worse than useless.] I enclose you a bank-note for twenty pounds, as my hearty contribution to your testimonial. . . . I send it with a wish that the pressures on my income would allow me to make it much greater—with an earnest wish that the pulpit occupied by my grandfather may be long filled by your excellent pastor—and with my hearty desire that God may vouchsafe him health, happiness, and peace, and in them you and all his congregation may find long and unclouded blessings."

Mr. Justice Talfourd's handsome contribution and the letter that accompanied it must have greatly enhanced the value of his testimonial in the eyes of our friend himself, and must make it a more precious heir-loom for his family.

All this praise and commendation might have gone far to mar the disposition and spoil the character of an ordinary man. It seems to have had no such effect upon our friend. All through his character was strikingly devoid of

both conceit and ambition. He never vaunted the remarkable talents that he undoubtedly possessed, nor did he ever care to use them for his own aggrandisement. With his superior ability, backed up by his prepossessing appearance and natural suavity, he might in all probability have risen to a much higher and more lucrative position, but so long as he could hold his own in that sphere of life in which it had pleased Providence to place him, he seemed perfectly content. He never cared "to rush into print," as he phrased it, nor to push himself forward in any way. He found all the enjoyment that he cared for in the unostentatious discharge of his daily duties, and in the quiet and peaceful pleasures of his home, his library, his garden, and the intercourse of friends. He was not only a Christian, but a simple-hearted and sound-minded philosopher; and with a smile of genial humour could shake his head at the noisy solicitations of ambition, and say, though with a better warrant than that of the lotus-eaters, "There is no joy but calm."



CHAPTER IX.

FRANCE AND HER REVOLUTIONS.

IN the early part of December, 1851, the public mind of England was startled by the French President's famous *coup d'état*. France had for some little time been getting uneasy again. Napoleon was indeed as ardent as ever in professions of attachment to the Republic; and if meekness of speech and deportment could be taken as a sufficient pledge of his loyalty to the rights of his fellow-citizens, they had certainly every reason to be satisfied. Yet in certain quarters a suspicion was growing that the President was not altogether to be trusted: he was too fond of talking about his uncle, especially to the army. The end of his Presidency was drawing near. There was evidently a danger that he and the army might attempt to prolong it; and, going on in the same way, might prolong it indefinitely. The parliamentary leaders met, consulted together, and determined to make the danger they feared impossible by arresting the Chief of the State. But they felt it necessary to proceed cautiously and quietly. This they were at great pains to do, and fortune seemed to smile upon their patriotic craft. The President appeared to suspect nothing, and on the 1st of December, whilst they were bringing their scheme to a climax, he held interviews with them as usual, wearing a

countenance eloquent with trust and confidence, and veiled in an expression of benign innocency as soothing to the eye as the green robes of nature. However, before morn dawned, the apparently unsuspecting President had arrested all the conspirators, as he now called them, and had filled Paris with soldiery as enthusiastically devoted to himself as they had been to his uncle. Shortly after he made use of the universal suffrage granted to the free citizens of France to procure a plebiscite voting him ten years more of office.

Just about this time Mr. Legg addressed two letters to the *Berkshire Chronicle*, in which he endeavoured to shew the causes of the perilous instability and uncertainty just then observable in the Government of France. These letters are so good in themselves, and so likely to be interesting just now, that I venture to give copious extracts. Much that Mr. Legg then foresaw has now become history. The wily and ambitious President did get himself made Emperor, and he and France have now suffered in such a way as his own unprincipled ambition, and his Empire's vanity and lack of sober truthfulness very plainly forboded. And now, after a new baptism of blood, and amidst fresh darkness and confusion a second Republic has been formed, and we are anxiously wondering what will be its fate. We earnestly pray that in it the history of the first Republic and its unprincipled and crafty President may not be repeated. Whether this is at all likely may perhaps be seen to some extent from our friend's letters, published December 4th and 11th, 1851. He thus heads them, and proceeds :—

**"FRANCE AND HER REVOLUTIONS, IN THEIR RELIGIOUS
ASPECTS.**

To the Editor of the Berkshire Chronicle.

"‘And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields ! King making victory.’

"SIR,—The events which have been happening during the last eight days in France, at which not only that country, but the lovers of constitutional government throughout Europe have stood aghast, have prompted me to come out of my obscurity—but not to play the partizan, nor the politician, nor the prophet. . . . My object is to record certain reminiscences of more recent times, and the reflections which the study of French history for the last two hundred years awakens in a religious mind. Alas ! that it should be a record of the public faith of France so often plighted to Protestants, and so often openly dishonoured and violated under the demoralizing influence of a cruel superstition. It may be that we shall find in this the key to unlock the horrid mysteries of revolution and blood through which she, that might be the queen of nations, has been struggling to a freedom which the 2nd of December has put as far off as ever. That day gives promise that the world is once more to be gratified by beholding the doings of an Imperial Napoleon. . . . Stripped of all the parade and profession which are thrown out in order to secure a gracious hearing, there is still presented to us, in the present revolution, the enterprise of a bold or foolhardy and artful adventurer, mingling himself in the confusion of adverse parties, while affecting that his political career was to be entirely popular ; intriguing deeply, while appearing merely to be drifted along by the stream of events ; cautiously calculating the chances afforded by different sides ; refusing one party and preferring the other, simply because it affords him the most efficient means of influencing public opinion, and of maturing his ultimate designs. . . . Though I said I would not attempt to prophecy, yet, looking at effects as flowing from their causes, one can hardly keep from conjecturing the probabilities of the future. If the present ruler of France is confirmed in the seat into which he has vaulted, by the mockery of a uni-

versal suffrage under the bayonets of an army faithful to the usurper, the declaration of an empire is but an inevitable result."

SECOND LETTER.

"It moves me, Romans, it confounds
The counsels of my firm philosophy,
That ruin's merciless ploughshare must pass o'er,
And horror flap her wing on you proud city."

"SIR,—The most perjured land and throne in Europe is France. Even in our own days we have seen, amid galas, and *fêtes*, and fountains flowing with wine, the Parisians swearing to every form of government as fast as it could be manufactured and presented. *Vive le Roi! Vive la Revolution! Vive l'Assemblée Nationale! Vive le Consul Premier! Vive l'Empereur! Vive la Republique!* But amid all their *vivas* nothing has been permitted to live—nothing to be unchangeable but change. Now, this dreadful familiarity with violated oaths, I have not the least hesitation in asserting, is owing entirely to the training of the Church of Rome. For why should the House of Bourbon have surpassed, in point of perfidy, not only all the pagan governments of antiquity, but even all other Roman Catholic Governments themselves, but because the ancient pagans never taught perjury as a system, and because the kings of France were the eldest sons of the Church, and had most of the paternal image impressed upon them. Their father, the Pope, was a liar from the beginning, and the race of St. Louis proclaimed, in every one of their acts, the dreadful affinity. The poor Huguenots never trusted them but to be betrayed, nor can it be shown that they ever honestly fulfilled one of the engagements into which they entered with their Protestant subjects. In short, the history of French Protestantism is but a detail of trust on the one hand, and treachery on the other. In 1561, the first edict, securing to them the exercise of their religion, was granted with ample appendages of ratifications and oaths. But a ratification is only a crafty device, and an oath for confirmation, instead of being an end to all strife, when used

by the Church of Rome, is but a mockery and a snare for entangling, disarming, and massacring all who dare to dispute her lordship over the free conscience of man. The edict was soon violated, the Protestants flew to arms to defend their lives and vindicate their rights; they triumphed, and new oaths were added to the pacification which their valour secured. Mezerai tells us that this was violated in its turn. The court every day restrained their liberty till but a shadow was left, and, instigated by the priesthood, the people assailed them wherever they were weakest. When they could defend themselves the governors used the king's authority to oppress them. Their cities and garrisons were dismantled; and those who were in the King's council were massacred with impunity. At length the Pope, the House of Austria, and the Duke of Alva entered into a conspiracy with the eldest son of the Church for their utter ruin and extermination. Six times by solemn treaty, ratified by solemn oath, were their liberties and the freedom of their worship guaranteed, and six times did civil war spring from broken vows, and pour out the best blood like water, while it wasted the treasures of France. All this happened between 1561, and the era of that most awful tragedy—the greatest of the crimes of Rome, perhaps the most fearful monument of dissimulation, hypocrisy, and human wickedness which this world has ever witnessed—the massacre of St. Bartholomew. For two whole years preparations went on in the most deceitful calm for the consummation of this grisly horror. The Protestants were laden with honours, their leaders invited to court, were granted the same privileges, held the same posts of dignity with their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects—in short, there was a complete Protestant emancipation. It was a deceitful gleam heralding a dismal storm. The fears of the Protestants were lulled; those of the Pope were awakened. The latter, eager for butchery, and thirsting for the blood of the saints, could ill brook an abstinence of two long and weary years. He even trembled with apprehension, as well as impatience, lest the French king should have an atom of pity left, and should not fulfil his compact. But his ravening thirst for Protestant blood was more than slaked by the cruel issue. The eve of St. Bartholomew (1572) closed in. With deafening clamour,

and desolating fury the storm burst. For three days and nights the work of human slaughter went on. The first of these, in Paris, witnessed an infuriated populace, officered by priests of Rome, revelling in the blood of upwards of five hundred Protestants of distinguished rank, and ten thousand of inferior condition ; nor was Rome satiated till seventy thousand corpses covered the soil of France, and that fair country had become a very shambles. Paris shouted in ecstasies of joy, and the cannon of St. Angelo roared back an approving response from beyond its Alpine barriers. Our own country deeply felt the shock. Scarcely could the cautious policy of Elizabeth, fearing to try the wager of battle with two such formidable powers as France and Spain then were, restrain the noblemen and gentlemen of England from forming a ' Protestant Alliance ' according to the spirit of the times, by raising twenty thousand men, at their own expense, to avenge the horrible carnage of St. Bartholomew's eve. And, surely, if ever the flagrant violation of all laws, human and divine, called loudly for signal vengeance, it was when Popery inscribed this portion of her annals so appropriately in Protestant blood. . . . In tracing the remote causes which led to the revolutions of France, we come next to the last great national act of treachery on her part—the revocation of the edict of Nantes. The two centuries of dominion which have been added to Rome by the massacre of the French Protestants, she owes entirely to her grand maxim that ' no faith is to be kept with heretics,'—that no dissimulation is too profound, and no perfidy too gross to be employed against them. But in craftily prosecuting her schemes for the revocation of the edict of Nantes—an edict deliberately made, *irrevocably* established, repeatedly confirmed—she paved the way for the sorrows that came upon her firstborn, and for the humiliating position she herself now fills. . . . The fortunes of Protestantism in France, by this act, perished, and at the same time the house of Bourbon filled its cup of guilt to the brim. The Jesuit who signed the revocation gave the signal for the revolution to advance with the death warrant of France in its hand. It requires but a slight attention to the operation of causes from 1685 to 1785 to follow the chain that links together the Protestant proscriptions and massacres of the one period

with the revolutionary horrors of the others. The bigoted court of France acted out Rome's favourite maxim to its final results, and it issued in the reign of terror. The Protestant element has always been the spring of national prosperity, and while suicidally warring to extinguish it, the exchequer of France was exhausted. The victory which had long trembled in the balance between Rome and the Reformation was now decided in favour of the former. But what had France gained? Industry paralysed, trade crippled, agriculture languishing, and new taxes imposed which pressed heavily on a people, the greatest part of whose trade had been in the hands of the Protestants, and had been driven away along with them. Ignorance and Popery, idleness and crime, always grow together, and draw each other to a marvellous height, until having overlaid and smothered the last elements of morality and order, a new element springs up—that of infidelity. It was in a den concealed in this rank and luxurious overgrowth that the French infidel philosophy hatched its progeny; till, like the fabled cockatrice from the swelled nest of the toad, it sprang full-fanged and venomous the demon of the French revolution. All Europe shrank in startled dismay from before this horrid birth; but in France, with unnatural ferocity, it turned upon its parents to devour them. The Democrats' club scattered the Jesuit Cabal. The guillotine of Robespierre supplanted Rome's secreted dagger. Perjury and hypocrisy, fostered by a false religion, ended in atheism. This new development reigned in the room of Papal influence; bloodthirsty, pitiless, and revengeful, doubtless, but not more so than the usurper it succeeded, and certainly not so perfidious.

These influences are again descending on France like fire on the sacrifice. No Great Industrial Exhibitions—no number of prize medals carried away by the exquisite artistic skill of her sons, can abate their consuming fierceness. What boots it though they know all science and excel in all the arts if they know not God? Atheism and Popery have stolen from them the key of knowledge. Intelligence capable of ascending high as the throne, the being, the attributes of the Eternal, they have, but under these influences it is but a

capacity which sinks while it elevates; unemployed, it becomes imbruted with the body; the very soul is sensualised, and presents the strange phenomenon of an animal without its instincts. This was the mind of France under the tyranny of Rome. When the intellectual faculty is misemployed, perverted, and rendered active only to expend its energies on what is derogatory to its high destination, the man becomes a fiend. This was the mind of France during the years of Rome's offspring—the reign of terror. And now, at the best, it but lives to learn and diffuse that science which, viewed apart from God, begins in vanity and ends in vexation of spirit. Nor will these revolutionary fires be ever quenched, to all human appearance, till the land of violated oaths has often baptized herself in blood for that which she has unrighteously shed. Read thus, the history of France and her revolutions is but a demonstration of that which she has impiously denied—the moral government of God. How different would have been her story if the doctrines of Luther, and of her own sainted son, the immortal Calvin, had prevailed. The bitter sorrows of massacre, proscription, and exile would never have been hers. The roll written with lamentation, and mourning, and woe, a few folds of which I have placed afresh before your readers, would never have been. It has pained me much to unfold it even thus far, but it is not against France that I have written, for I do not believe that these dreadful crimes are to be attributed to any national tendency to bad faith, nor to any special predilection for despotic government on the part of her rulers, but solely to the evil principles of the Church of Rome. It is she that in the face of history must confront the whole of the appalling charge. She it was that used her infernal logic to melt the obligations of an oath, and steeled the heart to use her sanctified stiletto in shedding all this blood.

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Now it is the system that works all this among the nations that has been seeking from ourselves a more distinguished local habitation than our forefathers, who knew something of her maternal tenderness, thought fit to leave her. Instead of listening to her prayers and yielding to her arrogance, let

us adopt in all our Italian policy the language of the last number of the *British Quarterly Review*, 'Popery, secular and sacred—head and heel—soul and body—*down with it !*'

"I am, sir, truly yours,

"WILLIAM LEGG.

"Reading, Dec. 11th, 1851."



CHAPTER X.

PAPAL AGGRESSIONS.

"Now I saw in my dream," says Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, "that at the end of the valley lay blood, bones, ashes, and mangled bodies of men, even of pilgrims that had gone this way formerly; and while I was musing what should be the reason, I espied a little before me a cave where two giants, Pope and Pagan, dwelt in old times; by whose power and tyranny the men, whose bones, blood and ashes, etc., lay there, were cruelly put to death. But by this place Christian went without much danger, whereat I somewhat wondered; but I have learned since that Pagan has been dead many a day; and as for the other, though he be yet alive, he is, by reason of age, and also of the days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them.

"So I saw that Christian went on his way; yet at the sight of the old man that sat at the mouth of the cave, he could not tell what to think, especially because he spoke to him though he could not go after him, saying, 'You will never mend till more of you be burned.' But he held his

peace, and set a good face on it, and so went by and caught no hurt."

Whether Giant Pope is as senile now as Bunyan believed was the case in his day, is a question often and curiously discussed; one party of Protestants vehemently asserting that he is reviving, and is quite as ferocious and bloody-minded as ever, whilst another aggravatingly smiles at the idea of his being anything but an amiable and highly respectable old gentleman, and pronounces it decidedly *bad ton* to make any outcry about him. Both these parties were in existence about the years 1851-2, but the latter, which seems to have the predominance in the present day, was then apparently in the minority. At that time Papal aggressions were considered to be so threatening that the matter was brought before Parliament. On the 7th of February, 1851, Lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a bill to counteract the aggressive policy of the Church of Rome. This bill passed its first reading by a large majority—395 against 63. Such a majority shows clearly enough what, at that time, was the feeling of the country about the policy of the Church of Rome. However before the bill could get through Parliament, the Government was so seriously defeated in an attempt to extend the county franchise to £10 householders that it felt bound to resign, and so this measure fell through, and it was not again brought forward. This same subject of Papal aggressions was again agitated at the close of the session in connection with that Ecclesiastical Title bill which has only just lately been repealed. The beginning of 1852 saw the fears of the Protestants very little, if at all, allayed. Dread of Papal aggression was still prevalent throughout the country. On January 19th

a meeting about the matter was held at Reading. Mr. Legg was present and spoke. With what reason he then joined in that hue and cry against Romanism which has not yet died out, the reader will see from the following extracts from his speech :—

“Those of you,” he said, “who read the public prints, must have observed that the powers of Europe have lately been in great perplexity, concerning a certain monstrous thing that has been roaring behind all the thrones of Europe, and terrifying their possessors. That new manifestation of society has been called ‘Communism’; it has become the sphinx of all the rulers of Europe, and its riddle they must solve, or they feel they must be torn in pieces by it. There is only one of two courses to be adopted in regard to this new development of society, either to concede to it many of its claims, and endeavour to rule it; or, if that could not be done, to make an effort utterly to put it down, and destroy it. In the year 1848 an effort was made by the continental powers to concede something to liberalism, and to civil freedom, as well as religious toleration, but it was only a hollow truce. Events have transpired since then which have made it perfectly manifest that a Catholic League has been formed. I do not pretend to say the day when, or where the place; it was formed, and it is manifest from the results that there has arisen a conspiracy in Europe against human liberties; and if we look at the circumstances that have developed themselves, we must see that in all places alike it is operated upon by two agencies—by the priest and the policeman. These two influences have been working in all States alike; and political spies and Jesuitism going hand-in-hand, have made it manifest there is a conspiracy against the liberties of Europe on the part of the Popedom. If we look at Rome itself, what do we there see? We see infallibility sitting behind a hedge of bayonets, subverting all the former promises made to the people. Not even Hildebrand could have invented a more astute scheme of foreign diplomacy, nor a more rigorous one of home administration, than Pius IX. behind the hedge of bayonets where he is now

sitting. The first result of his return from Gaeta was the imprisonment and the driving away of every patriot, of every political writer of any power, of every scholar, and, in fact, of every gentleman that had stood up and been co-operating for the liberties of Rome and her people. .

. . . Rome herself is sitting cowering within a circle of new-made graves, trembling under a fearful despotism which infallibility has again set up, much more ferocious than it has been during any former period of Rome's history. As to religious liberty there, we know for a fact that an edition of Bibles, amounting to several thousands, commenced there by American missionaries during the short period of the Roman republic, has all been consigned to the prisons of the Quirinal. The whole Scriptures that had been prepared for circulation in Rome, have been caught up and incarcerated in the Mamertine prisons. The imprisoned Romans and the imprisoned word of God speak aloud as to the tendency of Rome both on civil and religious liberty ; both the men who might have drunk in the truth, and the truth which was prepared for their reception, are lying rotting in the same dungeons, and the Word of God is not allowed to enter within the walls of him who calls himself the ' Vicar of God on earth.' Look at Naples : whatever can be done by compulsion, physical and moral, is done in order to repress the liberty of reading the Word of God, or enjoying Protestant worship. The world has been filled with amazement lately, and utterly astounded by reading those letters of Mr Gladstone, recording his discoveries in Naples, where there are from 20,000 to 30,000 state prisoners, walking in chains or lying in dungeons, perishing and dying—men that had taken part in Liberalism that existed for a short period under Ferdinand. These men are now in rows, with pale and haggard faces, with hands laden with chains, and limbs with iron. Our hearts are wrung with anguish at the statements written by Mr Gladstone. Look for one moment at Popery ; see it working in that model kingdom, and upon that model king—for Ferdinand is held to be a model king by Roman Catholics ; and in what catechism is he instructed ? Why, in the catechism of Liguori, of which Mr Gladstone says, ' it is the most detestable and pestiferous production he had ever been called upon to read.' It declares in the most

emphatic manner the divine right of kings to rule as they please. It declares most distinctly, that kings are not bound by any oath they take for the welfare of the people, provided it infringes upon their divine right to do what they will with their own. This is the statement of an intelligent and highly conservative gentleman, who certainly would not have willingly exposed an influence favourable to authority, had he not believed in his soul that a most cruel wrong was inflicted on vast masses of his fellow-creatures by the operations of that system. . . . Look for one moment at France. Up to the 2nd of December the reaction there was not so great, because there was still some power in party and some power in the press; now the Jesuits are running to and fro in all directions, pulling the strings at a Madonna show, or teaching the young, whose waxen minds they are forming into the shape they desire, and they have entirely dismissed the teachers of the Communal schools by thousands, and put the young people of France under Jesuitical training, and all the young people are constrained to attend the services of the Church of Rome. These are some of the fruits of the reaction. Louis Napoleon is leaning up against the Church of Rome, and the Church of Rome is leaning up against him, while it holds him only as the *locum tenens* of the Bourbons, ready to dismiss him when they are ready to resume the reins of government. It is the Papal system that is working all this oppression and cruelty throughout these lands. Look awhile to Tuscany: there a new thing has appeared, and it has been decreed throughout all the Florentine States, that the Pope may send as many "bulls" as he pleases, to be published by the Bishops, without consulting the civil authorities, provided the Pope and Bishop agree that the things are spiritual; and in reference to this, we know they will call everything spiritual, for they have no really spiritual minds of their own. They do not know spiritual from secular, for they have so jumbled the one with the other, that no one can disentangle the web which these Jesuits have thrown over the face of society. Look at Austria, and we find that Prince Schwartzenberg has introduced the Jesuits there into full power. They have formed there—what I hope the young men will form here on the other side—a young Catholic Association, and the young people are drafted

from the schools to join that League, to swear that they will do everything to support the influence of the Pope, and to restore again religious liberty to Austria. Religious liberty! What do they mean by it? We know what Papists mean. By it they mean the right to annihilate Protestantism, for we know that Protestantism and Popery were alike tolerated in Austria. The Papacy has the ascendancy there; Protestants are still permitted to worship, but under Jesuitical influence: their liberties are greatly contracted, and it is a most astounding fact that Frederick William, of Prussia, has begun to take the serpent to his bosom; he allows Jesuits to enter his country that have descended the Rhine, and have caused discord and confusion to thousands of families. Recently, that curiosity of a King, who, in my estimation, has a greater resemblance to James I., of this country, than any other, has gone about speechifying and tinkering up constitutions that have astonished the civilised world, and so extensively has he countenanced the system of Romanism, that Protestantism has entirely gone to the wall. . . . It is a positive fact that in last July, the Grand Duke of Anhalt published a proclamation, headed, 'To my people,' which seems to have been written as if a greater potentate had held the pen, for it tells them that for their better security, the powers of Europe have pledged themselves to resist the further progress of liberal principles within their territories. There is, therefore, manifestly a league and conspiracy against religious freedom on the continent of Europe; but let us look a little nearer home. This resolution refers more particularly to the aggression made by the Papal authority in England. It speaks very significantly about it, for it says that it is 'the duty of all Protestants to unite both for the defence of their civil and religious liberties.' . . . But what is meant by the aggression? It is for the accomplishment of the purposes of the Catholic League, and the furtherance of those great European conspiracies. Now there is another country we are to look at: it is the name of woe among the nations: a country with a fine climate, the most fertile soil, with magnificent harbours, and with every appliance for an extensive commerce. I need not tell you that its name is Ireland. It is lying at the foot of the Popedom. There murder howls for blood. Talk of mal-administration or misapplication of

funds! If funds are misapplied, it is to create a class of men who demoralise those people from amongst whom they arise. There murder is committed for blood—there priests make their denunciations from their altars—there faction defies law! What more do you want to prove mal-administration of funds, than educating a class of men to produce such misery, degradation, and spiritual death? Look at the condition of Ireland. Is it any better since the year 1845? Has there not been one little rebellion since that, and is not the author of it enduring the penance of banishment for his zeal? Has there not been a gathering of Irish, in reference to the law passed last year, repressing the titles of Roman Catholic dignitaries, and do they not tell us they care nothing for legislation? Are not these facts staring us in the face? But poor Ireland is groaning under a greater misery and suffering. Even in the rear of famine and death, the Popish church could glean. There you found the landlord could not collect his rents, nor the tax-gatherer his dues, but the Popish priest could collect his, simply because Popery has not the eye to pity, or the heart to feel, but the hand to rob and gather up that which the widow and orphan children required for food. But across St. George's Channel there is the same darkness that existed previous to the sixteenth century. They are not able to take part and to compete with the British in enjoying the liberty of the nineteenth century, simply because they live under the influence of the priest; and they certainly claim our sympathy. Now make a comparison between Scotland and Ireland. . . . Whilst Scotland has been sending out her sons, and they have been known by their industry, their intelligence, and their virtues, Romanism has sent out hers from Ireland to fill the fever-haunted dens in our crowded cities and towns, or poured them forth to seek a residence on the shores of Canada, or our other colonies. What has made this difference? Why, the one is under Popish, and the other Protestant influences. The influence of the system is so indelibly engraven, that 'he who runs may read.' I want not persecution to the Papists. I ask for no persecution. I only ask that justice should be done to them. I only ask that as no other church in Great Britain receives money from the consolidated fund for the education of their priesthood, save the Roman Catholics, that

they be put on the same footing—that we may have a ‘fair field and no favour.’ I ask not that we should rise up against them and oppress them, or denude them of their natural rights as citizens, but I have a right to ask that they shall not be supplied with money to work against the happiness of society.”



CHAPTER XI.

A CHURCH RATE CONTEST.

MR. LEGG was a lover of peace, almost to a fault. His genial temperament shrunk from the blighting influences of animosity ; as some richly flowering orchard in Spring might be supposed to shrink from an east wind. Quite as much did he abhor giving pain ; that seemed to be every whit as repugnant to his disposition as receiving pain. I always found even his wonderful humour and wit perfectly mellow—entirely free from sarcasm. Sparkling wit, such as his was, which does not even turn sour upon the stomach, proves the vintage that yielded it to have been of a more than ordinarily genial character. Indeed, this is perhaps one of the best tests of the thoroughness of a man's amiability—the regard, or the want of regard, for the feelings of others which is manifested in the play of his wit. Tried by such a test, Mr. Legg's amiability always would have stood the proof. There were not a few who first learned to love him from the forbearance and kindly consideration which he manifested towards foibles of theirs of which they themselves were very painfully conscious. But geniality and weakness of disposition did not go together in our friend's character. Whilst he heartily obeyed the Apostolic injunction, "As

much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men," yet, when this ceased to be "possible," he would not hesitate to proceed to hostilities ; and this he could do with such calm consciousness of strength, as to be able to preserve almost unruffled his habitual placidity of countenance, and courtesy of speech and demeanour. His love of peace, and especially of peace amongst Christians, kept him from joining in any of the polemics of Dissent, as a rule ; and constrained him to cultivate the friendship of all sections of professing Christians. For twenty-four years—without failing once, I believe—he attended the annual Missionary Meetings of the Wesleyans in Reading ; and Episcopalians, and Baptists, and other sects with which he was brought into contact, received from him friendly attentions equally assiduous. Yet, when a wrong had to be assailed, or an injustice prevented, the good cause of right could find no more hearty champion than he, no matter who they were against whom he should find himself obliged to contend.

These traits of Mr. Legg's character appear to me to be very largely manifested in a speech which he made at a vestry of St. Mary's parish, on the 12th of February, 1852. St. Mary's church-yard was full to over-flowing ; and further, the General Board of Health had decided against the continuance of intramural interments. The then Vicar—the Rev. S. W. Yates—thought it his duty to see the parish provided with another parochial burial-ground. The new cemetery at the east end of the town had not been long opened, and promised ample accommodation for many years to come ; but the Vicar pleaded that that was not parish property, and was at an inconvenient distance. He therefore proposed that the parish should purchase two acres of

land to supply the place of the churchyard now closed for burial purposes, and that this plot should be paid for by a church rate. Naturally enough the Dissenters of the parish very strongly objected to this measure. In the first place, they objected on principle to the payment of a church rate, no matter for what purpose it might be applied ; and in the second place, they objected to be obliged to pay for a cemetery which would be the sole property of their neighbours. A stormy meeting about the matter was held ; Mr. Legg was present, and spoke, not only with all his usual ability, but also, as it seems to me, with a very happy mixture of firmness and genial courtesy. He thus began :—

“Gentlemen,—I feel as if this was the most unfortunate assembly that has been called together in our parish for sixteen years. I believe there is not a man here to-day who is perfectly at ease in his own mind ; for myself, I can truly say, that I have come here more in sorrow than in anger. I feel very deeply at the aggression made upon the happy state which the parish has enjoyed since 1836. I feel as an individual, that since that time I have striven very conscientiously to live at peace with our respected Chairman and all around me. If I have erred in any respect, it has been on the side of sacrificing something. I will not say that I have sacrificed principles, but I will certainly say that I have sacrificed friendship. I withdrew from the Anti-State Church Association because I wished to be peaceful and quiet, and would not be accessory in any way to a state of fermentation about the established principles of the Church of England, with which I disagree. For this, I am aware, I have been greatly blamed, and have lost the sympathy of a good many friends. At the same time, however, I am convinced that it was a wise and good course to pursue, because we had a great work coming on that could only be done by the union and goodly feeling of all Christians, standing heart and hand together. And I do think that a question of a piece of two acres of ground should never have been allowed

to interrupt that feeling. My friends, it is highly impolitic to disturb the peace and amity of a happy and quiet parish, moving on comfortably together, respecting the parochial clergymen and the parochial authorities, and not uttering a single word against them. For myself, I know that my pulpit, for the last sixteen years, has never had a word uttered in it in any shape against the Church of England. Last night, however, at the close of a service, I did tell my people to come here to-day and consider this matter, and when I was telling them it certainly did seem quite strange. I hold that this movement is impolitic on the part of those churchmen who feel the great importance of uniting together against all forms of Papal aggression. I know that there are many of them men whom I have learnt to love and highly esteem, and I would this morning have them strive to persuade the Vicar and the Churchwardens if they can, to put a stop to this movement before it goes any further. I had much rather, Mr. Chairman, that yourself and brethren, who have been working at peace with all men hitherto, if you do not feel you are sacrificing some very great principle, should give up this movement at the beginning; for I feel that if it is carried on there will be a most intense opposition to this movement. I feel that there will be such a manifestation of feeling as has never been displayed in this parish. I think it is impolitic, because it is introducing a new practice—a thing that has never been done in St. Mary's parish previously, namely, the purchase of land by church rates. At the time that the churchyard was set aside for sepulchral purposes, there was no such thing as church rates in existence. The tithes at that time, three hundred years ago, were distributed differently; a portion of the tithes went to the clergy, a second portion to the poor, and a third portion to the wants of the church and the churchyard itself, therefore there were no taxes during that long period. It was first set on foot and supported by the parishioners, but some of the gentry got a portion of the tithes—the great tithes—and often left the clergymen with very little. I feel that this is an invasion, and will not do much towards conserving the peace.

But further, Mr. Chairman, I would say, and I am sorry so to do, but I think this movement is unjust. I believe that

to enforce any tithes connected with religion is totally unjust. This is either a religious or a trading movement. If it is a religious one that the parish church should have a new burial-ground, then I think it ought not to be put unjustly on those who can have no possible interest either in the parish church or burial-ground so provided. I believe it to be unjust towards God, who decrees that his services shall be done by a willing heart, a willing mind, and not have recourse to robbery for burnt offerings. But further, I believe it to be unjust to Christianity that legal processes should be adopted in order to enforce the maintenance of anything connected with its operations. I believe that to be true, because it is wrong to make such a demand; for Christianity is most beautiful in her own simplicity; simple she is not of the earth, she is of heaven; and, therefore, it is wrong to look upon the earth for the maintenance of her blessed purposes. I believe it to be unjust to the gentlemen who are within the pale of the Church of England itself. I believe it deprives them of a great privilege. It deprives them of doing entirely for their own religious worship that which they feel should be done. I think that if those gentlemen who attend the Church, who profit by its teachings, who hold its principles dear to them, and who usually encourage it, I say I think it would be much more creditable to them if they would come forward liberally, and present the worthy and respected Vicar with two acres of ground as a freehold.

Now I think it is unjust to us to enforce such a matter upon us. We do not want the ground, we do not ask for it, neither do we wish for it, and therefore why should we be compelled to pay for it? What would any clergyman think if a merchant sent him in a bill for certain articles, claiming payment for them all whether he had had them or not, and he be compelled to liquidate the debt? Would that be just? Certainly not. Then how can it be put in this case? What would be said if he occupied a certain shop, and notice was sent him that if he left the premises he must continue to pay for them—he must pay for putting in a new front in order that he may compete with the neighbour who has come over the way? When the Commissioner was in Reading he spoke loudly against any company being made a trading community for the

dead. Now there is no doubt but that he meant it to be a hard blow against all Cemetery Companies. But I would ask upon the principle which the church now carries out, is it not precisely the same, and essentially a trading matter with them? For myself I have never once charged for baptizing any one, marrying a couple, churching women, or burying a single person. Therefore I am free to speak in this matter. The Chairman stated that he was free from any personal interest in this question; so am I. When the project was first set on foot, I was asked to take some shares, and I absolutely refused. I said I could not be connected with or trading at all in these things, that it was offensive to my mind so to do. Therefore am I at liberty to speak. I have no personal interest in the cemetery, no one to gratify by my conduct; I act in this manner because I think it is unjust to that large body of Dissenters who are resident in the parish. At the same time I think it is unjust to the Cemetery Company to think of opening another burial ground, after they have invested their property. They have rights, which they have obtained by Parliament, from the same Parliament which gave the church the right which it now possesses. . . . In that motion it does not say by what means it is intended to defray the expenses. If it is meant to enforce a rate, why not say so at once? If it is not meant, why should they call the whole parish together, keeping it for the last three or four days in one continued state of fermentation and excitement? I think, Sir, that this movement is highly impolitic, unnecessary, and unjust. I have in my pocket a curious little document. It has endorsed at the back 'church-rate, 1834.' It also says, 'This is the only church-rate I ever paid, having with others resisted the next levy that was made of this unjust impost.' I used hard words then; I was young. That, I am happy to say, was superseded by the voluntary principle. I wrote then upon the little document, which I have preserved as a kind of curiosity, thinking that when my remains were laid low, my children would find the document amongst my papers; that let what happen what might, I was resolved never to pay another church-rate under any circumstances. Well, the Vicar kindly waived his right of seeking another church-rate, and since that time we have all gone on peacefully and

harmoniously together, and I am sure for the matter of two paltry acres of ground we ought not to have been distracted. For my own part, whether the rate is levied or not, I shall never pay it. I cannot do it, without consenting to sin against my own conscience. I feel that I ought not to be asked. I am aware that is the law, but it is against my conscience. You can pursue the dictates of the law—you can inflict punishment on me if you think proper—you can take my goods—nay, you may imprison me, but I cannot voluntarily obey the principle of a law which I consider contrary to the law of Christ and all spiritual things. I am sure if you do press this forward, you will not only require additional accommodation for the judges, but also require an enlargement of the gaol for the accommodation of the parishioners. You have a right to put us in prison, and you will have to do so if this be carried forward; for I am sure there are a great many resident in St. Mary's parish who will not pay the demand. I perhaps may be permitted to mention a little matter, which in some respects is rather applicable to the present case. Whilst Oliver Cromwell was in Ireland, there was a town in which great slaughter had been made by the rebels, and Oliver was about to put it in a better condition. He was near the town, when General Flannogan, the commander of the rebel forces, sent a message to him that, if he did not withdraw his army forthwith, he would open his guns upon him immediately. Oliver, with his usual calmness, took the note out of the messenger's hand, perused it, looked round upon his Ironsides that surrounded him, as I do now upon the Ironhearts that surround me, took out his pencil, endorsed on the back of the note these laconic words, 'Fire away, Flannogan, yours, Oliver Cromwell.' If then we have to be distracted in this way—if a course so impolitic is to be pursued, against Scripture, necessity, or justice—then I exclaim, 'Fire away, fire away!' I shall not move any amendment upon the resolution, but merely say, 'No, no, no!'

CHAPTER XII.

SECOND MARRIAGE.

IN 1855 Mr. Legg married again. His second wife, who is now left to mourn a kind and loving husband, was Miss Dale, the principal of a school for young ladies. The union was a particularly happy one in every respect. Mr. Legg, knowing the incessant and arduous duties devolving upon the head of such an establishment, greatly wished Mrs. Legg to give up the idea of carrying on the school; but it was a work in which she had so long taken a real pleasure that she thought she would try, at any rate for a time, if it was possible to continue it without neglecting her husband or his rising family—her adopted children. Mrs. Legg was energetic and happy in her duties, and was much encouraged by seeing and feeling that the heavenly Father blessed her endeavours, and gave strength equal to the day. It was a gratification to her to know that to Mr. Legg it was always a source of great pleasure; for he thoroughly delighted in the presence and society of the young. Their innocent laughter, their brows unfurrowed by the “cares of this world,” their artless grace, and never-failing and unaffected vivacity, were to him like the sweet exhilarating sights and sounds of Spring; and living constantly sur-

rounded by them, he enjoyed their presence like a perennial Spring-tide. Moreover, in Mrs. Legg's school he found a sphere for that evangelical labour amongst the young, in which he delighted, and for which he was so peculiarly fitted. By a patience that no amount of wilfulness could ruffle, by a kindness as genuine as their own parents' affection, he won the children's hearts, and then gently constrained them to give those hearts of theirs to the Saviour. Thus not a few of Mrs. Legg's pupils found in our friend a true spiritual father, being brought by his instrumentality to the enjoyment of that faith in Christ wherein is found "newness of life." How happy and how beneficial his influence constantly was upon the young ladies residing beneath his roof, is strikingly shown from the many letters of condolence which Mrs. Legg received from old scholars after her bereavement. This the reader may to some extent see for himself from a few extracts :—

One writes—"Next to my own father, I have always remembered him as my second earthly parent, he being the instrument in God's hands of leading me to that Saviour whom your dear husband is now beholding, and to find in Him that rock on which, in every trouble, I can rest secure."

Another—"It seems almost impossible to realize that one so generally beloved and respected can have gone from your midst. I feel and know what a fearful blank it will be to even the partial residents at Downshire House, never to see his loving face among them, nor to hear his kind word of encouragement, which he had ever ready for all ; but how much more must be the loss to his sorrowing family."

Another—"I am sure your present and old pupils will all sorrow with you, for he endeared himself to us all while

we were members of your household, and we shall feel that we have lost a common friend."

Another—"How often has dear Mr. Legg, when seated in his study, pointed out to me the importance of making Christ my friend."

Another—"I shall never forget the many little kindnesses and sound religious principles that I, with all my school-fellows, received from him during the time I was at Downshire."

Whilst Mr. Legg thus extended his paternal care to Mrs. Legg's pupils, she acted a true mother's part towards his children; her only regret being, that her numerous domestic and school duties altogether prevented her from doing all that she wished to do for the service of the church, and all that she feared might be expected from her as the pastor's wife.

Thus was this good and kind-hearted man again blessed by his heavenly Father with that which he prized beyond any other earthly possession—a peaceful and happy home. As the fruit of this second marriage two more children were given him, so that now he has left behind him eleven sons and daughters to make the world happier by the reproduction of his virtues, and to transmit to posterity the genial traits of his character, and the sweet and hallowed traditions of his life.

CHAPTER XIII.

REPEAL OF THE INCOME TAX.

ONE of the things that Mr. Legg especially prided himself upon was his loyalty as a citizen, his patriotic submission to the powers that be. He not unfrequently boasted that there was no money that he paid away more cheerfully than that which went in the form of taxes. There is no doubt that he was perfectly sincere in saying this. His mind would be more than ordinarily capable of appreciating the immense advantages conferred by a strong and well-supported government, and at the same time incapable of such foolish fretting beneath necessary and lawful authority as we generally see for the most part manifested by men, who, through ignorance or baseness, appear incapable of conceiving of liberty at all except under the form of insolent lawlessness. Those who remember this trait in our friend's character may be interested by the perusal of a speech he made at a public meeting held at Reading in 1856. Though on this occasion he by no means spoke in support of the government, on the contrary, advocated a petition to parliament for the repeal of one of its most productive taxes—the income tax, yet his thorough-going loyalty was conspicuously manifested. The income tax had become at that

time very odious to the country. How that was needs perhaps a little explanation. Theoretically no tax is less objectionable than an income tax. That every man should support the government according to his income, seems at first sight one of the simplest and most evident of propositions ; and certainly the pressure of this tax ought to be much fairer than that of any tax upon commodities. The millionaire need not consume much more tea, sugar, etc., than the poor man, and so need not pay much more in support of the government by way of taxes on commodities. But if an income tax is levied upon the two men, say of fourpence for every £100 of their income, then of course the millionaire will have to pay, as he ought, a vast deal more than the man whose income is only £100 a year. Yet, practically this tax is necessarily vexatious. Thus it is evident that they who have only just enough to live upon ought not to pay the tax at all ; if they do, then they will have just so much less than sufficient to live upon as the tax takes from them. Then also taxes upon commodities press far more heavily upon the poor than they do upon the rich. In deference to these considerations the income tax is not levied upon incomes less than £100 a year, and those that do not exceed £200 are assessed only upon the amount that they exceed £60. This arrangement, however, has been introduced since the time of Mr. Legg's speech, and so in this particular the tax was then more vexatious than it is at present. Again, it is evident that incomes derived from trades and professions, which are precarious, and out of which provision for those who may survive us has to be saved, ought not to be taxed in the same ratio as incomes derived from funded property, land, etc., which are perpetual.

Such considerations as these render an equitable apportioning of this tax very difficult. But the vexatiousness of the tax especially arises from the impossibility of ascertaining the exact incomes of those subject to it, except by means of such an inquisitorial character as to be almost intolerable, and when this is not done, such ample scope is necessarily left for dishonest practices, that the government in levying the tax practically offers to its subjects a premium for dishonesty. There were, however, further reasons for dissatisfaction to produce an agitation for the repeal of the income tax in 1856. Hitherto it had never been more than a temporary device. It was first imposed by Sir Robert Peel in 1842, to help him to carry out a scheme for the promotion of free trade. He intended it to supply the deficiency in the revenue that he expected would be temporarily caused by the loss of a large amount of import duties which he desired to abolish. He however stipulated that it should be imposed for only three years, by which time he hoped that the increase of commerce produced by his reduction of import duties would enable him to dispense with the new tax. His expectation was completely fulfilled; but a device once found so useful was not likely to be forgotten, or to fall into disuse very speedily. To meet various emergencies this tax was imposed again and again, but always for a limited time only. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. By him the income tax was very advantageously modified, and provision was made for its gradual extinction. For two years it was to be sevenpence in the pound, for two years sixpence, and for three more fivepence, after which, in 1860, it was to be abolished altogether. In 1854 the Crimean war broke out. In consequence of this the tax was raised

first to tenpence-halfpenny in the pound, and then to one shilling and two-pence. It was however provided that the Act by which this increased tax was levied should continue in force only during the war, and until the 6th day of April next after the ratification of peace. But the next year the Earl of Aberdeen and Mr. Gladstone went out of office, and Lord Palmerston became premier. Lord Palmerston had his own ways of managing, and they at least were not lacking in acuteness. He wanted more money for the war, and asked for twopence to be added to this tax, and at the same time managed to get the wording of Mr. Gladstone's proviso slightly altered thus, "during the present war, and until the 6th of April which shall first happen *after the expiration of one year* from the ratification of a definite treaty, and no longer." Now peace was really concluded at Paris on the 30th of March, but Lord Palmerston, with his characteristic "cuteness," managed to defer the ratification of the treaty till the 8th of April. Thus the increased income tax became due for another year, and the government obtained some six millions by Lord Palmerston's clever trick. However, as might be supposed, the country did not submit to this imposition without remonstrance. Public meetings were held demanding a repeal of the income tax. There were two at Reading, presided over by Thomas Harris, Esq., who was then the mayor. At the second meeting—which was an adjourned one—Mr. Legg spoke. This speech of his seems so illustrative, not only of his ability, but also of one interesting side of his character, which might otherwise have escaped our notice, that I venture to give it in full. He rose in support of a resolution moved by Mr. Rogers, the town clerk, and said :—

“Mr. Mayor and gentlemen,—The historical details and legal points relating to this tax have been so well and clearly given by the gentlemen who have preceded me, especially by Mr. Rogers, that I shall entirely leave those parts of the question. But I wish to say a few words on the moral aspect of it—the moral character of surcharges. I myself feel the greatest readiness in paying every fair and reasonable tax for the efficient government of my country, and for the maintenance of her dignity and freedom, and honour among the nations. Next to the support of my own family, I pay no money with more cheerfulness than that which the welfare of my country demands. If she were less honoured, if her *prestige* among the nations were lowered, if she were less able to defend her shores and protect her allies, I should feel that my own family would be, in that proportion, less dear and precious to me. That part of the resolution to which I speak, is the part that declares the process of levying this tax to be offensive ; and to me it is so, because I believe it produces most injurious moral effects upon the people. During the period of its operation, commercial delinquency has been fearfully on the increase in this country, and lately it has risen to such a pitch that statesmen, legislators, and philanthropists stand perfectly astonished, and seem utterly perplexed how to devise a remedy. The government trusts no man, and the consequence is that, by their system of financial espionage, the very character is produced that is pre-supposed to exist. Dr. Arnold governed Rugby school on the principle of trusting every boy's honour and truth. They might tell him the greatest lie they could conceive, but he would not believe them capable of it, and his biographer tells us that the boys, ere long, scorned to practise it. They said, ‘We will not lie to Arnold for he will believe us.’ On this well-known principle of human nature, I do believe that if a government wanted to demoralise the people, if it wanted to destroy individual self-respect and confidence among neighbours, it could not adopt a more effectual means than the income tax, with its apparatus of surcharges and inquisitorial inspection. For my own part, I always returned to a fraction, the income derived from the chapel where I preach, and I have never been surcharged but twice. The first time was at the instance of a person, if I remember right, of the

name of Gibbs, who surcharged a large portion of the inhabitants of the town, until after a great deal of excitement, with a public meeting and memorial, the government thought fit to remove him out of the sight of the people of Reading. And now again this year, some person connected with these matters in our town, has thought proper to add one-third to a certain portion of my income. You may say, Why don't you appeal? I cannot appeal. I should feel myself lowered in the presence of the inhabitants of a town who have always treated me kindly; and my own people might justly say,—Here is our minister, who urges us so emphatically to 'give tribute to whom tribute is due,' 'to fear God and honour the Powers that be,' defending his own word in a court of appeal respecting his income-tax return. Gentlemen, to you who are tradesmen, lawyers, and men of independent property, to have your word unsuspected is much; but, on the old principle that Cæsar's wife must not only be above blame, but above suspicion, to me, as a minister of Christ and of truth, it is everything. Let my word be called in question, nay, after I have written, 'I do solemnly declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have made a full and fair return of all profits, etc.,' let me myself be dragged into an appeal court to establish my truthfulness, and my power of usefulness is gone; or, at least, as greatly diminished as the agents of government have power to diminish it. No, gentlemen, I will not appeal. The greatest wrong has already been done me when my word was suspected, and the mere fact of paying a few pounds unjustly will not injure me,—the injustice of that act will not injure me,—it will recoil upon those who have inflicted it. I have always been so scrupulous in matters touching the revenue, that in the old times of dear postage, if any of my friends desired me to carry a letter for them, I used to say, Do you write simply because I am going to such a place? if so I will take your letter, but if you must write whether I carry it or not, then send it through the post-office, for I will not defraud the revenue even of the postage of a letter. And on this matter of the income tax, I have never claimed what I find many of my brethren have been allowed to do, the deduction of £10 or £12 for books and stationery, as necessary expenses of my profession. With this conscientious scrupulosity, I must

say I felt a little indignation when I found that some irresponsible person, in defiance of my solemn declaration as a citizen, and my word as a minister of Christ, had added one-third to a portion of my taxable income. Gentlemen, a system that involves such degradation of honest men, and such demoralization of all who come under its influence, should be done away. Why, instead of being deemed innocent till others prove us guilty, should we all be deemed dishonest to the government that is paid to protect us, and called upon to prove our truthfulness by a process the most inquisitorial and humiliating. Holding as I do most strongly these opinions, I cordially support the resolution."



CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH OF DR. MORISON.

IN 1859 Mr. Legg lost his highly-valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Morison, of Trevor Chapel, London. Dr. Morison was nine years older than Mr. Legg, and had left home to be apprenticed to a watchmaker at Banff before our friend was old enough to form his acquaintance ; and so it was not until the latter was twelve years old that that intimacy and friendship between these two good men commenced, which was, through forty-seven years, fruitful in so much mutual affection and esteem. The two not a little resembled each other in disposition and ability. Both of them children of parents remarkable chiefly for their strong Scottish common sense, rustic simplicity, and profound piety ; both born on the same soil, brought up amidst the same scenery, nurtured amidst similar home influences ; they grew up with similar strength of character, calmness and sweetness of disposition and devout piety. Dr. Morison, as we have already seen, was the means of bringing Mr. Legg to Reading, gave the charge at his ordination, delivered the funeral address over the grave of his first wife, and presided at the meeting in 1851 when his church presented to him their handsome testimonial. These, and many other similar acts of friendship, had

firmly cemented that brotherly affection, which had sprung from early intimacy and similarity of life and disposition. And so it was that amongst the many mourners that gathered in Abney Park Cemetery on the 20th of June, 1859, none felt the pangs of bereavement much more keenly than Mr. Legg. It fell to his lot to say a few words over the open grave of his beloved friend. Well might his countenance be pale and his voice tremble; yet not even then did his characteristic calmness altogether forsake him. We are told that his words thrilled all those who heard them. They were the only expression of his great sorrow which he allowed to escape him, and sounded like the sobs of his heart uttered articulately. Speaking briefly, he said :—

“There lies what was once a noble, manly form, with a bright and smiling countenance. Low is now laid the head that was once crowned with honour; beamless is the eye that glowed with purest light; silent is the tongue of the eloquent; and the heart that once burned with the purest fire and beat with the highest hope, has now become a clod of the valley. Here I assist in burying one whose friendship I enjoyed for forty-seven years; and it was a friendship that knew no interruption. The heart that lies there among the clods was a kind, and true, and faithful heart, if ever such beat in the bosom of man. And many who are not privileged to be here to-day will feel a thrill of solemn interest when they think how oft he helped them, how kindly he counselled, and how much he befriended them. I can shed no tear. I am far more happy than I am sad. I rejoice that the conflict is over with the enemy that assailed him, and fought with him for five-and-twenty years. It was not a common amount of suffering, as we have heard. A strange as well as powerful enemy is Death. He is not a native of this earth, but an intruder; he came in by sin, and will be conquered only by Him who paid the penalty of transgression. In the case of him whose remains are now deposited, we see the most ample skill and the most devoted perseverance of

medical men entering the contest with that enemy, which has ended, after many years, as such contests always end, in man lying down in the dust. Neither medical science, nor the affectionate concern and self-denying efforts of kindred and friends, could avert the issue. The battle has ended as we see. Our brother fought well, laboured well, and sleeps well ; and upon that coffin rests the eye of Him who hath said, he shall rise incorruptible and undefiled at the last day."



CHATER XV.

PRESENTATION FROM CASTLE STREET AND TRINITY CHAPELS.

CO-PASTORSHIP OF THE REV. D. MOSSOP.

ON the 25th of May, 1863, Mr. Legg received a testimonial which he always prized very highly. Both Castle Street and Trinity Chapels had been for some little time without pastors. Our friend had watched over the two congregations, and cheerfully and heartily rendered them all the assistance in his power. As long as these two churches had been in existence it had been his daily custom to pray for them and their pastors, and so whilst they were without ministerial oversight it had seemed to him only a matter of course to supply for them this want so far as he was able. His was not a kindness of "word or tongue" only, but of "deed" and of "truth." That the self-denial and extra work this involved were at all remarkable—such as to merit special thanks—never seems to have occurred to his mind; and so he was taken altogether by surprise when the Castle Street and Trinity people took the first favourable opportunity to give him a substantial testimony of their gratitude. Both churches had again obtained overseers; the Rev. R. Bulmer had settled at Castle Street, and the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, then B.A., now LL.B., had settled at Trinity. The London

Missionary Society meetings were being held. On the Monday morning there was a public breakfast in the Bridge Street School Rooms. Mr. C. J. Andrewes presided, most of the ministers of the town were present, also the deputation from the Parent Society—the Rev. W. W. Gill, from Raratonga, and the Rev. E. J. Evans, from Madras. After breakfast was over, the two new ministers of Castle Street and Trinity Chapels rose and begged to be allowed to present to Mr. Legg, on behalf of the congregations which they represented, an elegant time-piece and a handsomely-bound copy of “Bagster’s Self-interpreting Bible,” consisting of four volumes. The time-piece bore the following inscription:—

PRESENTED TO THE REV. WM. LEGG, B.A.,
BY THE MINISTERS AND FRIENDS OF
CASTLE STREET AND TRINITY CHAPELS, READING,
AS A TESTIMONY OF REGARD FOR HIM, AND GRATEFUL APPRECIATION
OF HIS REPEATED ACTS OF KINDNESS.—25TH MAY, 1863.

“With much feeling,” says the newspaper reporter, “Mr. Legg expressed his thanks for this unexpected token of their good will,” and the feeling was genuine. There was nothing that our friend prized much more highly than the good-will of those whom he prayed for and cared for. There are some men of such self-sufficient and metallic dispositions that the good-will of their associates is a matter of indifference to them, and some few of a temperament so perverse that they seem to find a positive enjoyment in the consciousness that they are the objects of ill-will; but our friend’s disposition was neither metallic nor perverse, but eminently genial and humane, and he always treasured this testimonial as a pet possession. The timepiece he always wound up with his own

hand, taking great pride in the accuracy with which it kept time. Measured by the amount of happiness produced, perhaps the Castle Street and Trinity people never did a much kinder deed than this presentation of theirs.

By this time Mr. Legg's health and strength had become considerably impaired through the advances of age and the development of his constitutional disease. In 1862 he had notified to his people the need that he felt for some assistance in the discharge of his ministerial duties. The Rev. D. Mossop, from Beaconsfield, happened to supply for a Sunday or two in the summer of that year, whilst Mr. Legg was having his holiday. The church was greatly pleased with his ministrations, and mindful of the recently expressed wish of their pastor, requested him to stay amongst them as assistant minister, with the view of ultimately becoming co-pastor. Mr. Mossop yielded to their solicitations, and at the end of a year, having grown in the affections and esteem of the people, he was recognized by them as co-pastor. This co-pastorate proved peculiarly happy. Mr. Mossop considerably increased the congregation, infused new life into the church, and thoroughly won the hearts of the people. In all this Mr. Legg rejoiced; he seemed incapable of anything like jealousy; and mutual respect and affection confirmed the harmony of the two pastors' co-operation. For three years they laboured together; and when, at the end of that time, the younger co-pastor felt bound to accept an appointment to the oversight of a church at Brisbane in Australia, his loss was not more lamented by the church than by his venerable colleague.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BISHOP OF OXFORD AND THE DISSENTERS. INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION.

On the 13th and 18th of December, 1863, the New Hall, Reading, witnessed two crowded and animated meetings of the Dissenters of the town. The then Bishop of Oxford—Dr. Wilberforce—in a charge recently given to his clergy, had animadverted upon what he considered the three greatest obstructions to their work. These he declared to be bad cottages, beerhouses, and Dissenters. Not unnaturally, Dissenters felt themselves very much aggrieved by this untoward classification. They had been in the habit of humbly trusting that they were co-workers with the clergy so far forth as the ministers of the Establishment were doing Christ's work. And now, to find themselves pointed out as one of the greatest obstructions to the usefulness of the clergy, and ranked with bad cottages and beerhouses, was, to say the least of it, rather aggravating. The Dissenters of Reading resolved to meet together and publicly protest against the injustice that the Bishop had done them—or, as some felt, the insult that had been offered them. On this occasion our friend, after many years of peaceful labour, felt himself again constrained to buckle on his armour, and do battle for his

principles. Again he proved that, greatly as he prized peace, and especially peace amongst Christians, he was by no means indifferent to the claims of truth, and far from lukewarm in his attachment to the principles he professed; he also showed that his uniform and rather conspicuous courtesy towards the clergy of the Established Church was not at all due to obsequiousness, and admitted of his both feeling and speaking very strongly when occasion demanded. What he thought and what he felt about the distinctive principles of Non-conformity never received much clearer and more forcible expression than on this occasion. On that account I venture to present the reader with a few extracts from his speech. He said :—

“ We meet this evening, driven by circumstances which we did not provoke, and could not control, to consider the position in which we are placed in this Diocese as Protestant Dissenters. Our pious ancestors, when for conscience sake and in the face of persecution, they separated themselves from the Church as by law established, left us a spiritual, and moral, and to some extent also, a political heritage. They left us a moral example. By the very act of separation they made a public and decided avowal of their attachment to their Saviour, and to the teachings of His word, which we should be recreants to ignore. Probably, in England there was never a more enlightened body of divines than those who led that exodus when the Act of Uniformity was passed. Their sepulchres are with us, their institutions are with us, their doctrines are with us to this day. Would that their mantles rested on us, and that we might emulate their faithfulness and zeal. But the political heritage they left us has been mightily improved by the accession to the government of these realms of that Royal House, which has no more loyal subjects within the four seas than the Protestant Dissenters, and to none of her subjects is the present occupier of the throne, an object of more just and passionate endearment. Nor can court parasites prevent this from

being known in court circles. . . . I have said our position is greatly improved since the time that the Puritans left the church. *Then*, the ejected of St. Nicholas, Worcester, the founder of Broad Street Church here, and the ejected of St. Mary's in this town, had to hide themselves from their persecutors in a bark rick in Mill Lane, and be fed by their adherents through its chinks, as they stealthily passed the place in the dead of night; *now*, if we please, we can make ourselves like a city set upon a hill. *Then*, we had to build our Meeting Houses in back courts, approached by narrow passages; *now*, we may, if it suits our taste, build our chapels in the aristocratic square, call them *Churches*, and surmount them, as in the case of Halifax, with spires which shall not only point with 'taper finger to heaven,' but look down upon everything ecclesiastical within their view. *Then*, the Five Mile Act forbade us a nearer approach to a borough town; *now*, we can plant ourselves in the densest centres of population, whence to send out every Lord's-day multitudes of our most pious and intelligent young men, to care for the often neglected rural villages and hamlets. *Then*, the Test and Corporation Act precluded a Dissenter, unless he chose to violate his conscience and desecrate the Holy Sacrament of the Lord, from taking any part in the local government of his town;—*Now*, I am surrounded on this platform by several Dissenting gentlemen, who have filled to the entire satisfaction of their fellow-citizens, the highest office of the magistracy in this borough. Do I say these things boastingly? No! I name them to the glory of God, and to express the encouragement I feel at the gradual development of His Providence toward perfect civil and religious equality in this country. Or, if I must be called a 'fool for glorying,' my reply is, 'They have compelled me.' We do not now meet with the scorn of public functionaries in general, whose salaries we help to pay; that fell to the lot of our forefathers; when Judge Jefferies pointed his finger at Richard Baxter, while placing before him the right of preaching, and said, 'Stop, Richard, I see a rogue in your face,' and met the reply, 'Indeed! my lord, I was not aware before that my face was a mirror.' No civil officer in her Majesty's pay

ever thinks now of treating the Dissenters as a Pariah caste. We all know that beer-houses are very powerful obstructions to all who seek to promote morality, virtue, and religion, and if the presence of Dissenters in the parishes is considered the greatest of the hindrances, and most worthy of the Bishop's supervision, it seems a confession after all that they 'may not be few.' But what is the remedy which his Lordship proposes? It is 'more distinctive church teaching.' Now this takes us a little by surprise, for it has been commonly reported that the Bishop's teaching has not been remarkable for distinctiveness, at least not so distinctive of principles, as of places—that he has preached High Church views in a High Church place, and Evangelical doctrine, where nothing else would be tolerated. Far be it from me to treat Bishop Wilberforce with any want of respect. I would give honour to whom honour is due; but I hope I shall ever show the greatest courtesy to the *truth of God.*

A legitimate commission to convert sinners! A warrant from ecclesiastical authority to declare the story of Him, who expired for perishing men upon Judea's Cross! Yes! it is the guilt of Dissenters that they despise these qualifications; that, having one Master, and one to whom alone they are responsible, they feel His command their sufficient warrant, and the weight of their own eternity an adequate incentive to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature. In acting upon this warrant, we are accused of 'unsettling the minds' of the people belonging to the clergy; and we have done so, and the minds of the clergy themselves. We have aroused them to their duty. There was not a single 'National' School in any parish in Reading till the Dissenters built the British School in Southampton Street. Indeed, the National Schools have all been formed since I came to live in this town. There was not a single Sunday School in the parishes, till the Baptists established one in Hosier Street, and the Independents one in connection with Broad Street Chapel. There was no systematic Tract lending till we divided the town (when it contained only 15,000 inhabitants), into three districts, and into about sixty sections, with a corresponding number of visitors, who regularly

visited every house and cottage consenting to receive the publications of the Religious Tract Society. It was twelve years after we had this scheme in full operation before one of the Churches (and that not a parish one), adopted the same course. Now it is manifest that in this town, at least, the Church has had the succession of all these activities through the dissenters. But what does the Bishop mean by the Church? Not long ago his Lordship was speaking at a public meeting of the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' at Brighton. He detailed the glorious things which 'the Church' had already accomplished in Madagascar, how the martyr spirit had been evoked there, how after all their European teachers had been banished from the island, and persecution had raged for very many years, the native Christians had stood firm and greatly increased, how the blood of the martyrs had been the seed of the Church. And all this had been the fruit of 'the Church's' faithful labours, and was used by the Bishop, in his own powerful way, as an argument for sending out a special Episcopal Mission, now that a new King was on the throne favourable to Christianity. But that great work was begun in Madagascar, the Bible was translated into Malagasy, the Churches were founded on that rock entirely by the agents of the London Missionary Society, and 'the Church' in the Bishop's sense, had not touched the work with one of her fingers,—no sacramental efficacy, no priestly operations there. But not a word of this escaped the Bishop, and he is shut up, either to own that the Nonconformists may be called 'the Church,' or to be charged with practising on his audience in a manner that I do not choose to name.

From the Creation, therefore, to the coming of Christ, the Church was never built on any men, or order of men, but was founded on the living God. It is fair, therefore, to ask the Distinctive Teachers where they find their personal succession scheme, or any importance attached to it? It is not in the Bible—it is not in the Constitution and Canons of the Church of England—it is not in her Articles, nor can I find it anywhere in the Prayer Book. I am afraid it is a tradition from Rome, adopted to lead back this dear old England of ours into that false Church, whose essential element is the

subjugation of the human mind to human authority in matters of religion. A gospel ministry is God's own positive institution. Ministers are Christ's ascension gifts to the Church. When they are what they ought to be they are of very great importance and utility, and when filled by holy men of God the pulpit is always worth more than it costs. But whenever a revival of vital godliness has taken place, the work has been done, not by the pretended succession Bishops, but generally in spite of them, by Nonconformists. The Waldenses in the valleys of the Alps; the Lollards in England; Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox; the Puritans in their day, and the Wesleys and Whitfield in later times, are all full proof of what I say. The English Reformers are no exception to this remark. *Who* broke up the fallow ground, and sowed the seed of the Reformation in England? *Who* watered it with their tears and blood before Henry VIII. quarrelled with the Pope? The Bishops? Emphatically, No! They imprisoned the saints, and shed their blood like water. You devout members of the Church of England, who tremble for your children's future faith, teach them to read Fox's Book of Martyrs. They will there learn that Protestantism had its worst enemies among the Apostolical Bishops. As an order they all sided with Anti-Christ, excepting only five. As a Nonconformist minister it gives me great pleasure to mention those hallowed names—Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and Jewell. Would I could have recited five hundred instead of five; our country would not have been in the state in which it is to-day. Since their time, it must be confessed, that all the persecutions of the Puritans, and all the injuries and insults offered to Nonconformists have generally originated with the Bishops. Thanks to a kind Providence, their power is limited, and public opinion is going on to limit it more and more. . . . Still, there is an Apostolic succession which I claim for myself and my brethren;—it is the only supreme and essential rule of succession,—namely, the preaching of the *truth*, of the *faith*, of the *doctrine*, taught by the Apostles. We want Christ crucified, and the demonstration of the Spirit. . . . Now, if moral preaching, which at least may appeal to com-

mon sense, only preached the people into infidelity, what other fruit can we expect from mere Sacramentarianism? Puseyism was simply a reaction on the then widely-spreading Evangelicalism in the Church; Rationalism is a reaction on Puseyism; and from Rationalism there is but one step to Infidelity, and that step has been taken by a Bishop who says that 'Moses is a myth,' and if so, we know that Christ can be nothing more, for He says, 'If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me.' The inference is, he that believes not Moses believes not in Christ. No, we have no fear that either Sacramentalist or Rationalist will put down Dissent in the parishes. They may proceed from altar to altar, and from hill to hill, but they will have, like the son of Peor, to exclaim, 'How shall we curse whom God hath not cursed, and how shall we defy whom the Lord hath not defied.' The preaching of the gospel prevailed against the power of the Cæsars, and the still more formidable thunders of the Vatican; it now proceeds with quickened impulse and growing strength; and as soon might we expect the ark to fall before the image of Dagon as the ordinance of God to be overcome by the devices of men."

As he advanced in years Mr. Legg's constitutional disease became more and more painful and imperious, often sorely trying his patience, and continually crippling his energy. Doubtless, it was mostly owing to this that he appeared to shrink more and more from any extra exertion, and that that fervid eloquence which had spontaneously burst from his lips in former years, now became intermittent and somewhat difficult to call forth. Yet, ever and again, as occasion demanded, his power proved itself undiminished; and, mellowed by age and chastened by long experience, it appeared more grateful than ever, when it did display itself.

In 1865 Reading was all excitement and bustle from an "Industrial Exhibition" that was going on in the town. Grand meetings were held at its opening and close. At the

latter our friend was present, and made a speech which appears to me as eloquent and chaste as any he had made in his palmier days now gone by. I venture to present to the reader the following extract. Addressing the Earl of Carnarvon, who occupied the chair, he said :—

“ My lord,—If I had not known it before that there is a great common heart of humanity in us all, I should have learnt it from your lordship’s speech this morning. We may differ in rank, in station, in idiosyncrasies of character, in education, and in cast of thought, but these are only the upper strata which vary locally ; beneath them all lies the common heart of man. There was a time when I could delight to read the actions of Alexander, the exploits of Cæsar, and of those other heroes of antiquity who turned the world upside down. I could admire the famous retreat of Xenophon with his ten thousand Greeks, and the immortal defence of the Straits of Thermopylæ, against the myriads of Asia, by three hundred Spartan patriots under their king. I could, descending through the history of other years to a period coeval with my own life, read with boyish rapture the blood-stained triumphs of our own country on the plains of Egypt, the mountains of Spain, and the fields of Waterloo. But years have sobered enthusiasm, and regulated thought ; I have learned to look with more delight on the bloodless and peaceful victories achieved by our modern civilisation. As a Christian I can never forget that the wreath of laurel that entwines our country’s brow was purchased by the life-blood of thousands ; I cannot forget that the sovereignty of the ocean on which she looks down from her towering cliffs in triumph, was procured by life-blood of her most gallant sons, empurpling almost all its waves ; I cannot forget that the shout which arose on the downfall of a former ruler of France, though loud and thrilling, was mingled with groans of dying heroes, and the wail of many a widow and orphan child. No ! it is not when I see my country leaning on the crimsoned sword of victory that I behold her truly great, and nobly glorious. But when I see her casting aside ‘ the garments rolled in blood,’ and assuming the white and stain-

less robe of love and peace ; when I see her risen up and standing on her native throne of rocks, looking in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south, for the sons of toil, to elevate them,—to energise the arm of industry and to reward the earning of its hand, as you have done this day,—it is then that I can hear with pleasure all the praises you can bestow on this dear old land. When I see our beloved Sovereign, from the loneliness of her widowhood, sending forth her commands to our worthy Mayor and his coadjutors to ransack the noblest of her royal palaces for such objects of antiquity, of beauty, and of price, as might serve for the delectation of her ancient and loyal borough of Reading ; when I see my country's princes—and I am convinced that unless the country had been in some good measure prepared by the services of one of them in this direction, the Laureate's happy phrase would not so easily have embalmed itself in every English bosom and become a household word in every English home—*Albert the Good*—to his memory we owe this morning a tribute of tender reverence—when, I say, I see her princes, her nobles, her statesmen, her merchants, her manufacturers, her ministers of religion of every name, entering into one grand *confederacy* to lift up the depressed, to remember the forgotten, and to cheer the heart of ceaseless labour ; when I see her sons and daughters, of every rank and age, uniting in one *holy alliance* to do good unto all conditions of men in the divers varieties of life, it is then that my whole heart beats in unison with all the praises you can lavish on my country. My lord, it is thus that rank may always win—how easily and cheaply win, the hearts of the people ; the condescension of the giver enhances immeasurably the value of the gift. It seems to me as if the dying wishes of a celebrated judge, who shed a lustre on this, his native town, were about to be fulfilled. When a youth of only eighteen he made this hall ring with his eloquence in pleading the cause of benevolence, while Dr. Valpy patted the head of the young orator, and bade him go on as he had begun. With his dying breath on the bench at Stafford, he charged the gentlemen of the grand jury to do their best to supply the great want of our country, which, he said, is the want of sympathy of class with class. . . . But I think we must all have learned some lessons of what

life itself is from this exhibition. As I have seen the beautiful results of human skill produced from crude materials, I have been reminded of the poet Laureate's lines, in his *In Memoriam* descriptive of his idea of life—

'Life,' he says, 'life is not the idle ore
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And plunged in baths of hissing tears;
And battered by the shocks of doom
To shape and use.'

May we all accept the shocks if they only shape us to the purposes of our Heavenly Father, both in this life and in that which is to come."



CHAPTER XVII.

SECOND CO-PASTORATE. RETIREMENT.

THE Rev. Daniel Mossop resigned his co-pastorate towards the end of 1864, and sailed for Australia in the early part of the next year. At the express desire of Mr. Legg, who felt himself increasingly unable to bear all the responsibility and discharge all the duties of the pastorate, the church sought a successor to Mr. Mossop. Candidates for the co-pastorate were heard all through 1865, and it was not till April, 1866, that any settlement of the matter was arrived at. Mr. S. C. Gordon, M.A., of Aberdeen University, and then prosecuting his studies at the Lancashire Independent College, had preached at Broad Street for three Sundays, and his ministrations having met with general approbation, a unanimous invitation was sent him to become co-pastor with Mr. Legg. This was on the 18th of April, and on the 30th of the same month Mr. Gordon signified his acceptance; but as he had not then completed his course of studies, he did not commence his stated ministry till the last Sunday in July.

Scarcely had a year elapsed before uneasiness and dissatisfaction began to manifest themselves in the Church. How things quickly grew worse and worse, and how at last

they culminated in most deplorable discord, and in the ejection of Mr. Gordon from his co-pastorate by a decree of the Court of Chancery,—all this I shall not relate. Some instruction, and more warning are doubtless derivable from such things as these; but it seems to me there are quite enough church dissensions already on record, to abundantly serve these purposes till the end of time; and as for this lamentable quarrel, and every other that may happen like it, the sooner they are buried in oblivion the better. I would, therefore, carefully abstain from writing a word to revive angry feelings, which ought by this time to have entirely passed away from every Christian's breast.

But from this unhappy contention there came certain issues most interesting and instructive to all Congregationalists, and such as we all ought to be able to consider and discuss dispassionately. What, in the eye of the law, is the position of a Congregational minister in relation to his church, and in relation to any endowment that may belong to the church, was clearly defined during the Chancery suit which resulted in Mr. Gordon's ejection.

In relation to his Church it was clearly shown, that in the eye of the law, a Congregational minister's position is a matter of contract, and dependent upon the will of the majority.

Efforts were made by the defendant's counsel to show that a pastor, when elected, was elected for life, and could not be removed unless for good cause shown; and such good cause it was contended could consist only in his having been proved guilty of heresy or immorality. In contradiction of this, the plaintiffs' counsel urged that it was not supported by usage; for the Court of Chancery had in several cases.

(which he cited) maintained the right of Independent Churches to dismiss their ministers when a majority was in favour of so doing. He also remarked that such a Church was a fluctuating body; in ten years' time it might consist of persons entirely different from those of whom it had consisted when the pastor was first appointed; and that a body so constituted could not bind its successors. Also, in his summing up, Vice-Chancellor Stuart said, "It is scarcely necessary to notice the argument that the tenure of his (Mr. Gordon's) ministry for life must be implied from the terms of the invitation and acceptance mentioning no shorter period. Nothing that involves an absurdity can by mere implication be made part of a contract. If it is to be implied that he was made minister for his life-time, even the unanimous vote of the congregation could not displace him. And if he could not be displaced, there would be the absurdity of his being the officiating minister of a congregation unanimously recusant to his services."

It was ruled and clearly stated that the minister has a legal right to all the emoluments of the Church so long as he continues to be its minister; but that a majority in the Church possesses the power to dismiss him; and then his right to the emoluments of the Church immediately ceases; and he has no equitable right to the perquisites and emoluments of the office to which he has lost the legal title.

As for the minister's claim to any endowment belonging to his Church, it was shown that in the eye of the law he possesses a claim only so long as he continues to be the minister; that all such endowments really belong to the Church, and the minister has a claim upon them only by virtue of his legal title to the office he fulfils; a majority of

the Church may dismiss him from his office, and so deprive him of his legal title to it, and then he loses all claim whatever to its perquisites and emoluments. The defendant's counsel endeavoured to prove that Mr. Gordon was a *cestuique trust* for life, but the Vice-Chancellor ruled that this was impossible, because he was removable from his office by the vote of a majority, and so was nothing more than a tenant-at-will.

The power of the trustees of all such property was also clearly defined. It was shown that they are simply the servants of the Church, and bound to pay to the minister whom the Church has appointed and supports, all endowments with which they are entrusted for the benefit of the minister. It was proved that they cannot withhold the proceeds of such endowments from the minister so long as he continues to be the minister, and is not dismissed by the Church. It was also shown that the trustees, as trustees, have no power to dismiss the minister; that they can have such a power only as they are members of the Church, and are amongst a majority voting for the minister's dismissal. A case was cited of a French Protestant Church in London, endowed by royal grant. There were two ministers connected with the chapel, who could not agree; and the governing body—the Consistory—undertook to dismiss them. The ministers applied to the Court to be restored to their offices, and their prayer was granted. The defendant's counsel endeavoured to use this case in the interests of his clients. The Vice-Chancellor gave it as his opinion that these ministers obtained their prayer because it did not appear that the Consistory was actuated by the wish of the congregation. Thus it appears that neither the trustees nor the deacons

have the power of dismissing a minister unless authorised by the Church.

This definition of the law with respect to endowments seems to me to largely do away with all objections against them. It is often said that they render a minister undesirably independent of his Church. But this objection is based upon a total misconception of the law. Fully stated it would run as follows: It not unfrequently happens that a Church is afflicted with an unsuitable minister. If there is no endowment he may be got rid of by the failure of the pew-rents, and the consequent drying up of his income. If, however, there is an endowment, he can live upon that, and so cannot be got rid of at all. But the law as laid down in this Chancery suit obviates any necessity for resorting to such an unchristian mode of getting rid of a minister as that of "starving him out." He may be dismissed at any time by the vote of the majority, and after that will have no claim whatever either upon pew-rents or endowments; the Church immediately takes possession of both, and can pay them to the minister whom it proceeds to elect to supply the place of him whom it has dismissed.

Nor does it seem to me that there is anything to shock one's Christian feelings in this power of a Church to dismiss an unsuitable pastor; at least for those who hold Congregationalist views as to what constitutes a Church. We maintain that a Church is an organised body of converted—not nominal, but truly converted—Christians. That being the case, the minister cannot be anything more than *primus inter pares*. By virtue of his office he is first amongst his peers. We believe that Christ has made all his saints kings and priests unto God, and that there is no human king of

kings amongst us, and no human high priest. Then why should it be deemed a more shocking thing for a minister to be liable to removal by the unanimous decision of the greater number of his fellow-saints composing the Church in which he has been nothing more than *primus inter pares*, than for the judgment of many to be set at defiance by the judgment of one? If the inordinate claims of such a priesthood as that of the Church of Rome are admitted, then indeed a feeling of revulsion at the dismissal of a pastor by his Church is reasonable; or if, as is the case with the Church of England, merely nominal Christians are admitted to be members of the Church, such a feeling is excusable, for then the majority may be composed of worldly men; but for those who hold Congregationalist views it seems to me that this feeling is little better than fictitious sentimentality. Nor does that allowance which, alas! we are bound to make for false professors amongst church-members alter the case, for that consideration cuts both ways; the sincerity of ministers cannot be more satisfactorily determined than the sincerity of private Christians. And further, looking at this matter from a minister's stand-point, it seems to me that the chief aim of every earnest man must be to edify the Church of Christ, and wherever we fail to do that we best consult our Master's interests and our own dignity by seeking another field of labour. And if a Church proves itself so corrupt, that it is capable of dismissing, by a majority of its members, a faithful and earnest minister altogether qualified to minister to its spiritual necessities; simply because he speaks the truth too plainly, or because he fails to satisfy its worldly desires and ambitions, and then proceeds to elect a minister altogether after its own corrupt heart, such a Church richly

deserves the demoralization and spiritual ruin which is sure to speedily overtake it. The minister unrighteously dismissed is not half so much to be pitied as the Church which unrighteously dismisses him. We remember that the Apostles were sent first to the lost sheep of the *House of Israel*, and we remember how they were instructed to act when hospitality was refused them. Cases may arise in which a faithful minister will feel it his sad duty to obey this injunction of his Lord's, but alas for that Church by which *one sent* by Christ shall be compelled to depart, shaking off the dust of his feet.

In September, 1868, the Rev. S. C. Gordon was dismissed, by the Broad Street people, and in May, 1869, the Court of Chancery enforced the church's resolution. Mr. Legg was thus again left sole pastor of Broad Street Chapel. But his health and strength were now much impaired. He found himself unable to preach more than once on the Sunday, and that, together with so much other pastoral work as he felt himself capable of accomplishing, often involved much weariness. At last, as the year wore on, he felt constrained to retire from his office. He had borne the heat and burden of his life's day—he had weathered many a storm, he had survived the darkest tempest with which his Church had ever been visited, and now it seemed to him that the time had come for unbuckling his harness and resting upon his staff. His retirement could not fail to excite wide and deep interest. He had laboured for thirty-eight years at Broad Street. During that time how many had enjoyed, and how many had profited by his services. There were those who had grown up to manhood and womanhood beneath his pastoral care; there were many with whose holiest remem-

brances his form, and voice, and kindness were inseparably blended ; he had baptized both themselves and their children, he had united them in the sacred bonds of wedlock, he had buried their beloved dead ; and services such as these could not be recalled to mind without emotion. And not a few there were who had received from him more than ordinary kindness. He was not the man to confine the generous impulses of his heart within the limits of his official duties. Many a time, as far as he was able, he had given material help and comforting besides religious. And certainly there were those who could not but feel an interest in his retirement on this account. Then, also, the whole town had become familiar with him as a most useful public man, and favourite public speaker. And so when the pastorate of Broad Street Chapel again became vacant, for the third time during a period of one hundred and four years, there were many who regarded the event with deep interest. On accepting his resignation his affectionate people unanimously passed the following resolution :—

“That in accepting the resignation of the Rev. W. Legg, B.A., the members of the Church desire to place on record their deep sense of gratitude for the valuable services rendered to the Church during his lengthened pastorate of thirty-eight years,—whereby sinners have been converted, saints, many of whom are now in glory, have been established and built up in their most holy faith, the young instructed, and the dying cheered ; and for the uniform Christian kindness which the Church and Congregation have experienced in their intercourse with their pastor. And, while much regretting that age and infirmities now lead to the severance of the sacred and intimate relations which have so long existed, sincerely hope that he may yet be spared for many years, during which the Church may enjoy the great advantages of his matured experience, as they feel sure they will ever have his loving sympathy and prayers.”

As a further mark of respect and affection, a committee was speedily formed for the purpose of presenting Mr. Legg with a suitable testimonial. Subscriptions were cheerfully given, not only by the Church and Congregation, but also by many of his fellow-townsmen, who had known him long and esteemed him highly. On the 14th of December a crowded meeting was held at Broad Street Chapel for the purpose of presenting the testimonial, which consisted of a purse containing one hundred pounds, and an elegant silver inkstand. Many of the ministers of the town were present. The Rev. J. F. Stevenson, LL.B., of Trinity Chapel, the Rev. R. Bulmer, of Castle Street, and the Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, addressed the meeting with much feeling and eloquence. The Mayor, Peter Spokes, Esq., presided, and in a very effective and suitable speech presented the testimonial, reading the inscription upon the inkstand, which was as follows:—

PRESENTED,
TOGETHER WITH £100, TO THE
REV. WM. LEGG, B.A.,
ON HIS RETIREMENT FROM A PASTORATE OF 38 YEARS
OF THE CHURCH IN BROAD STREET CHAPEL, READING,
BY
THE MAYOR OF READING,
ON BEHALF OF 135 SUBSCRIBERS.
DEC. 14, 1869.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE END.

THE following extract is from a letter written by our friend to one of his flock, who had been sorely bereaved :—

“ Very precious were the treasures that have left you—I do not say that you have *lost* them—the dead are the *living*—their life is far higher than ours, and is spent in looking, not with anxiety, but with longing hope, to a life higher still, when all that have ‘died in the Lord’ shall receive a ‘body like His own.’ It is something to have death behind them. Before you and me his strange figure stands on the horizon, waiting till we come up to him. Perhaps when we do he may be little more than a shadow, and that shadow cast by light from His countenance who is the ‘Lord of life.’ Having done what we could, however imperfectly, we must leave those who have been dear to us in the hands of Him who will do them no wrong. . . . God be with you and His peace. Remember Him who is ‘*touched* with the feeling of our infirmities.’ ”

And now he himself was rapidly drawing near to that “strange figure standing on the horizon.” Was it that the “shadow,” though he knew it not, was getting for himself thinner and thinner, and the gladsome light of his Lord’s countenance nearer and brighter, that he was able to speak so comfortingly? The coming of the end so soon was un-

foreseen by him, yet his spirit, albeit unconsciously, again and again appeared to glow beneath the radiance of a nearer glory. Certainly these consolatory words of his sound like the accents of one who is himself rapidly passing the "shadow" by, and emerging into the "light" and glory beyond.

Towards the end of 1870 Mr. Legg became seriously ill. His medical man and esteemed friend, Mr. Workman, who, during his whole life in Reading, had generously and faithfully attended him and his family, regarded this attack with much anxiety. A complication of diseases most difficult to deal with had manifested itself, and in the midst of the others it seemed that his constitutional disease must at last consummate its ravages. But our friend himself was very hopeful; and doubtless the calmness and cheerfulness which he preserved under all his sufferings helped him more than once to rally. Yet the end was rapidly drawing near, evidently and inevitably.

The period of his passing away was like the close of a beautiful summer day—the twilight and the waning of it—during which tenderness and peace breathe forth simultaneously their melting influences. One thing that was very touching was the constancy with which about this time our revered friend's thoughts seemed to cluster about the memory of his mother, whom he had ever loved so well. I very well remember the speech he made at supper, the evening his retirement testimonial was presented to him. It was mostly about his mother; and only the irresistible wandering of his fond affections to her memory seemed to warrant such a digression. And again at my own ordination I remember how, seeming half to envy me a living mother's

love, with tears flowing from his eyes, he expressed a hope that I should never have to write home to my mother of any unkindness on his part towards me. It seemed to me at the time, and I believe the surmise was right, that those tears were called forth, not so much by a fear lest he should actually treat me with unkindness, for such a thing was almost an impossibility, but rather they were caused by a pungent feeling of regret that he himself, during all the trials he had lately passed through, had had no mother's affection and tenderness to comfort him.

Instances of this kind might be multiplied if it were desirable ; they abounded right to the end ; some of the last thoughts he was able to express had reference to his mother. And very likely this somewhat abnormal revival of his filial affection was a form of impending childishness, and as such it may possibly elicit ridicule from some ; but for myself my only feelings with respect to it are those of admiration ; for I fully believe that the truly wise man is always the most simple-hearted, and the truly strong and brave man is always the most childlike in his affections ; and when wisdom, and strength, and courage are all failing, it is delightful to witness the heart of a child bearing itself before the face of the King of Heaven. We remember how that great King Himself has said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

However, the reader must not suppose that our friend's strength of mind failed him before the end came. Such appeared to be by no means the case. As long as he was able to speak his utterances proved that his intellect was as strong, and vigorous, and calm as ever. There was one striking proof of this which I may mention. His long-known

and highly esteemed friend, the Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, frequently visited him in his last illness. On one of these occasions, very near the end, Mr. Rowland remarked to him, "I have come to see you yet once more before you go across the river ; I suppose you are conscious you have to cross?" The dying lips calmly replied, "They tell me so." After a few moments spent in prayer, Mr. Rowland resumed, "I suppose when we arrive in heaven you will come to welcome us?" There was a moment's pause, and then came this characteristic answer, "Well, when we are there we shall see what we are permitted to do ; good-bye." Thus, though almost too feeble to speak, and with the hand of death upon him, he was able to calmly consider, in his old philosophical way, how much he really knew of the possibilities of the heavenly world ; and to shape his answer, as usual, in accordance with the conclusion thus deliberately arrived at.

I have before me a touching account of these last days written by Mr. Legg's sorrowing widow, and I have her kind permission to make what use of it I think fit. I trust that Mrs. Legg will pardon me, and feel sure the reader will thank me, for presenting it in full. These are Mrs. Legg's words:—"I was greatly impressed of late with the increasing heavenliness of his prayers ; from them I could see a daily ripening for heaven—a full maturity of Christian experience. It was our custom to pray together at night. I can never forget the last hallowed occasion, which took place about a fortnight before his death, and was the last time of his being in his study. When thinking of retiring to rest he said, 'I am too weak to kneel to-night, dear ; come here, and let us stand a moment or two ;'—and, with his arms on my neck, he poured out the breathings of his spirit for the

realization of all the glories of the heavenly world with such richness and beauty, that, though he still entertained a hope, that when the weather changed he should regain his strength, I could cherish none. I saw plainly that as the shock of corn fully ripe he was prepared for the heavenly garner.

"Speaking of his first attack in December, and expressing our thankfulness that he was brought through, he added, 'It is well to be able to say, "Whether we live we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die unto the Lord."' The events of the future never concerned him, his mind was stayed upon his God, his faith was ever strong and unvarying.

"For two or three weeks he appeared to be rallying and gaining strength, but he was soon again prostrated, and it was evident to us all that his sojourn among us would be very short; but he did not realize it himself until the last Sunday of his life. He was at all times hopeful, and his unwillingness to give pain to others was even at this time manifest. To the last he would say, 'Do not fret, dear; Mr. Workman may be mistaken,' or, 'I do not feel so very ill; I think I may get better yet.' But when on the last Sunday I said, 'Oh, dearest, I know the parting must come, and that very soon,' speaking more decidedly than usual, he did not reply for a few minutes; meanwhile our dear and much-respected medical attendant (for whose disinterested and unceasing care and attention our hearts feel deeply grateful) came in; when my dear husband said, 'Do you think I shall die, doctor?' Mr. Workman replied, 'You are not far from your rest, dear friend,'—adding a few comforting words. The dear invalid shook his hand, saying, 'Christ is all and in all.'

"During the whole of his illness and weakness his mind was kept in perfect peace, but, owing to the loss of the power of articulation for quite four days before his death, we were deprived of those little legacies of love in the form of words, always so precious. When I put the hands of the two younger children into his on the Monday night before they went to bed, and bid them say Good-night to their dear papa, at the same time telling him that I hoped he would soon hear in heaven of their giving their hearts to their Saviour, that they might be prepared some day to join him there; he could only look upon them with a look glowing with that intense love and satisfaction which, as a fond father, he felt for, and in, all his family, and faintly say 'Yes.'

"The last three days of his life I could see by his eye and the loving way in which he would turn towards me, that he was much comforted by being reminded of those sweet promises of Christ which he had so often poured into the ears of others,—of the narrowness of the river—the arms that were around him carrying him through the stream—the numbers that were waiting to welcome him on the other side—and the glories that awaited him above. On Thursday night we could see that he was fast sinking. I repeated quietly the verse—

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

His eyes brightened. A few minutes afterwards he faintly articulated 'Good-bye, dear,' and closed his eyes; his breathing gradually became weaker and weaker, until without a struggle his spirit fled.

"So passed away one of the kindest of husbands, the most loving of fathers, and the most useful of men both in the town and in the church ; one that was always ready to assist his fellow men, either in upholding their rights as citizens here, or in directing them to that Saviour who alone could fit them to become citizens of another and a better kingdom. His work was finished, his rest was prepared,—into it he has entered,—and now he is satisfied, having awoke in the likeness of his God."

Our friend passed away to his eternal rest and reward early on Friday morning, February 3rd, 1871. On the following Wednesday his mortal remains were conveyed to the grave. The funeral was almost a public one. Business was in great part suspended in the town, and crowds thronged the chapel and afterwards the cemetery. The pall was borne by three clergymen of the Established Church and by three of Mr. Legg's own brethren in the ministry. The funeral service was conducted in Broad Street Chapel ; the Rev. J. Rowland, of Henley, delivering a very solemn and appropriate address. He spoke as follows :—

"We have assembled on a very solemn occasion ; a husband, a father, a minister, a townsman, a friend has been removed from us. We have lost his presence, his influence, his counsel, and his prayers. We shall see his face no more ; we shall enjoy his company no more, we shall hear his voice no more. Death has been here, and borne away our brother from our side. But we do not murmur, we do not complain, we are dumb, we open not our mouth, because God did it, and He does all things well. In His light we shall see light, and when we do we shall admire His wisdom, magnify His mercy, and adore His love. These are considerations that should make us perfectly reconciled to this dispensation. Our brother had lived the allotted age of man ; he had

reached the three-score years and ten ; he had resigned all responsible duties of his pastoral office ; he had taken leave of this pulpit, where he offered so many prayers and preached so many sermons. He had taken leave of his attached flock, and I believe he was in such a state of mind as to enable him to say, ' Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' Our friend was greatly honoured during his ministry within the walls of this sanctuary. There are many gone to glory before him who have been born again here. They are in heaven to welcome him, and to congratulate him on his arrival, and are casting their crowns at the Saviour's feet, singing, ' Not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the praise.' And there are some dwelling in various places who were brought to a knowledge of the truth under his ministry. Some are teachers in our Sabbath Schools, some members of our Churches, some ministers of the Gospel, and some missionaries of the Cross. His influence has extended far and wide, and it will continue to the end of time—undoubtedly throughout the ages of eternity. One of the instances of his usefulness came under my own notice a few years ago. It will be remembered by those advanced in years that Robert Owen, the great Socialist, came into this town, and sent a challenge to all the clergy and all Dissenting ministers to come and debate with him. A few days passed away, and no one took notice of the challenge, when, after much consideration and prayer, my brother had the courage, and nobleness, and faith to undertake to meet the champion. At that time there was in this town a man of considerable intelligence, who had previously imbibed infidel principles, who was glad enough to see his infidel principles advocated by such a man. The first night of the debate, upon returning home, he had this impression—the whole Bible is a cunningly devised fable, religion is all a delusion ; ministers and professors all hypocrites, and death will be nothing but an eternal sleep. The second night his confidence was shaken, and his mind greatly disturbed. On the third night his judgment was convinced, his conscience awakened, and his false peace disturbed. He left this country for America, but in all his travels his thoughts troubled him, and he found no sleep by night, and no rest by day. After a time he came back to

England, and paid a visit to Henley, where his relatives were then living. He came to our place of worship on the Sabbath evening a stranger. After the service he requested an interview. He was shown into my study, where I found him in great agony of soul, and weeping and sobbing; and he told me the story which I have just repeated to you. I am thankful to God that light entered his mind, and peace and joy were found in believing. I believe he is now a consistent member of one of our Metropolitan Churches. Many doubted the propriety of our deceased friend's step at the time, but here we see that one sinner was turned from the error of his ways, and saved from eternal death. There are many of this congregation who will look to our brother as being the instrument in God's hands of bringing them to the feet of Jesus; they never wish to forget him, and if they wished they couldn't forget him. They will remember him with gratitude and joy throughout eternity. You remember him not only as a preacher in this pulpit, but as a pastor in your homes; how meek, how gentle, how kind, and how sympathetic; and you parents remember how the little ones gathered round him, and looked up to him with affection as though he were their own father. In the time of your affliction he sympathized with you, and was ever ready to give a word in season to direct the perplexed, to solace the sorrowful, and to cheer those who were despondent. I am not surprised to see such a large gathering in this sanctuary on this occasion; when a man has lived and laboured for about forty years in a town it is no matter of surprise that those around him should endeavour to show their sympathy with the bereaved, and their affection and esteem for the departed. I ask you, brethren of this and other Churches, to bear in your mind at the footstool of mercy the weeping widow and the fatherless children. You need not heave a sigh or shed a tear for him; he is safe and happy, bearing the image and reflecting the likeness of his Lord and Saviour—absent from the body, present with the Lord. Have you ever thought much about that passage? It has often struck me. Absent—present; there is no intervening time. One moment he is in a frail tabernacle, which we are about to convey to its last resting-place, the next moment he is in the heavenly temple; one moment he is with his family watching around him, the

next moment with his spiritual kindred. We are not about to bury the pastor of this Church, we are going to carry to the grave the house in which he lived; he is alive and happy—perfectly happy, and, what is better than that, perfectly holy. In this world he was like most of us, a man who was far from being quite perfect; he was pious, but not perfect; he was sincere, but not sinless; he had his faults, and I will tell you what to do with them; avoid them; not only so, but draw the mantle of love over them; hide them from your sight, and from the view of others; do what you would wish survivors to do with your failings—bury them in the grave of forgetfulness. He had his excellences. I tell you what to do with them: remember them, and, above all, imitate them, and may the mind that was in him be also in you so far as it resembled the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray that the widow may lean upon an arm stronger than that of her departed husband, and may she hear the still small voice say, ‘Fear not, be not dismayed, I am thy God.’ ‘Leave thy fatherless children, the Lord will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me.’ Pray that the sons and daughters may choose the God of their father as their ‘guide even unto death,’ and their portion beyond the grave. God grant that at the last great day we may be all found robed in the Redeemer’s righteousness, and adorned in the garment of his salvation, with all his ransomed church to celebrate his praise for ever.”

The following Sunday funeral sermons were preached by Mr. Legg’s successor in the morning and by the Rev. J. Rowland in the evening. At the evening service the chapel was crowded to excess, and hundreds went away unable to gain admittance. Mr. Rowland preached from the text which had been worked in white letters upon the black drapery of the pulpit,—“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” The crowded congregation listened with sad and rapt attention. God grant that all of them, and all who may take the trouble to peruse these memoirs may learn, by blissful experience how great is that blessedness to which

this good man, and all the sainted dead, have undoubtedly attained.

It is further said that the "works" of all such "do follow them." May the Great Spirit, who has given us that assurance, graciously deign to make these pages instrumental in its fulfilment with respect to him whose worthy memory I have desired to preserve.

FINIS.



